

LIBERTY MEMORIAL
100 West 26th Street
Kansas City
Jackson County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1936

HABS
MO-1936

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service
Midwest Regional Office
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
LIBERTY MEMORIAL

HABS No. MO-1936

Location: 100 West 26th Street, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. The site is bounded by Pershing Road on the north, Main Street on the east, Kessler Road on the west and Memorial Drive on the south.

Quad: Kansas City, Missouri-Jackson County

UTM 15.362990.4327300

Date of Construction: 1923-1938

Architects: Harold Van Buren Magonigle, New York;
White and White, Kansas City, Missouri.

Landscape Architects: Olmsted Brothers, Brookline, Massachusetts; George E. Kessler and Hare and Hare, Kansas City, Missouri.

Sculptors: Robert Aitken, New York; Edmond Amateis, New York, *et al.*

Contractors: Westlake Construction Company, St. Louis;
Civil Works Administration

Engineers: Hool and Johnson, New York (structural)

Present Owner: City of Kansas City, Missouri

Present Use: Closed since 1994

Significance: Liberty Memorial vividly exemplifies the fulfillment of city planning concepts, combining monumentally scaled Beaux Arts Classicism envisioned by some of the nation's most notable and diverse delineators of the City Beautiful movement working in the early twentieth century. Liberty Memorial's complex of limestone buildings, together with the towering shaft, vast sculpture, bas-reliefs, decorative bronze art, and dramatic open vistas, all contribute to its power and distinction. Today it stands as one of the most important landmarks in Kansas City and one of the most commanding memorial sites in the nation. Moreover, Liberty Memorial remains one of the nation's most compelling monuments to those who sacrificed their lives during World War I and a remembrance of those who survived. Its dramatic combination of elements envisioned by architects, landscape architects, artists, and city leaders, is not only a momentous tribute to those veterans but also an important expression of American memorial architecture of the early twentieth century. Additionally, the Liberty Memorial houses the only public World War I museum in the United States.

Report Prepared by:

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Kansas City, Missouri

Date:

April 1, 2000

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Physical Description

The Liberty Memorial, located at 100 West 26th Street, is sited on a 47.5-acre tract in midtown, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. It is bounded on the north by Pershing Road, on the south by Memorial Drive, on the east by Main Street, and on the west by Kessler Road. Historic Union Station is located directly to the north and the United States Post Office is sited to the northwest.

Designed by architect Harold Van Buren Magonigle, with White and White and landscape architects the Olmsted Brothers, George E. Kessler and Hare and Hare, the Liberty Memorial generally consists of four main units; the imposing central shaft rising from Memorial Court, Memory Hall on the east, the Museum Building on the west, and the Great Frieze of the north wall. Additional elements of Liberty Memorial include prominent sphinx-like limestone statues placed to the south of the court, paired fountains, and the Dedication Wall sited at the north next to Pershing Road. Extending for 1/4 mile, Memorial Mall serves the main entrance to the site at the south. The entire complex, including limestone elements and landscaping, was constructed between 1923 and 1938.

Magonigle stressed particular architectural nuances in describing his design for Liberty Memorial.

These refinements include:

The top of the north terrace wall is a curved line higher in the center of the arc than at the ends by one foot, and all horizontal joints in the stonework and the terrace at the foot of the wall are parallel to this curve. It is this, which gives the wall its unusual effect of spring and life despite its enormous mass. The entire pavement of the Memorial Court follows the curve just described, likewise the southerly wall and the entrance steps of the court.

All walls incline backward to the extent of one inch in eight feet. This gives them an air of greater stability and brings them into harmonious relation with the taper of the Shaft, which besides diminishing in size toward the top has also the curved outline known . . . as entasis. From any point on the easterly or westerly steps where the outline of the Shaft is seen in relation to the corner of one of the buildings, it will be seen how the two lines move in unison.¹

Throughout Liberty Memorial the use of the wing motif as a decorative element, particularly through the Guardian Spirits, the sphinx-like sculptures and central figure of the great frieze, unified the design of the whole. Generally categorized as a landmark designed in Beaux Arts Classicism, Liberty

¹ H. Van Buren Magonigle, "Description of the Memorial," in The Liberty Memorial Association and J. E. McPherson, *The Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri* (Kansas City: The Liberty Memorial Association, 1929), 36.

Memorial also integrates a twentieth century artistic interpretation stemming from the Gothic in the Guardian Spirits of the shaft, and from the Greeks with the application of mathematical ratios and ceremonial form. It should be noted that the Gothic and Greek influences, as well as the Egyptian Revival, are only alluded to and are not fully realized in the final design.

Memorial Shaft and Court

Rising 217'-06" or 21 stories above the surrounding observation deck, the limestone shaft measures 36' in diameter at the base and 28' at the top, recalling Greek entasis. It rests 83' below Memorial Court where it measures 43' at the foundation. The shaft is crowned by a Flame of Inspiration originally created by a ring of steam and by accent lighting. The bronze ring that originally sent a 60' plume of steam into the air measures 9 1/2' in diameter and weighs 600 pounds. Seen from a great distance, the shaft casts heavy shadows due to the buttresses and by the engaged piers that carry the four Guardian Spirits of the flame at each side. Sculpted by New York artist Robert Aitken, the Guardian Spirits, each 40' in height and weighing over 11 tons, represent Honor, Courage, Sacrifice, and Patriotism. Honor is characterized by wreath of laurel, Courage by a helmet, Patriotism by a civic crown, and Sacrifice by a winged star on the forehead. Each deeply carved figure bears a sword, representative of militant guardianship, and carries near the tip of their outstretched wings the symbolic censer.

The following commemorative inscription is carved in raised letters on the southerly face of the limestone shaft:

IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE WORLD WAR
IN DEFENSE OF LIBERTY AND OUR COUNTRY

Placed just below the inscription is the cornerstone, stating the following in incised script:

DEDICATED * NOVEMBER * 1 * 1921

IN THE PRESENCE OF

MARSHALL FOCH * ADMIRAL BEATTY * GENERAL PERSHING
GENERAL DIAZ * GENERAL JACQUES
VICE PRESIDENT CALVIN COOLIDGE
ROBERT ALEXANDER LONG
PRESIDENT OF THE LIBERTY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

GUESTS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Inside the shaft is a passenger elevator and staircase which permits access to the observation deck around the rim of the censer, approximately 360'-06" above historic Union Station to the north. A bronze door, embellished with star-studded alternating panels of eagles and the interlaced monogram of the Liberty Memorial Association, reaches the interior. Angelo Tagliabue, of John Donnelly, Inc., designed the door under the direction of Magonigle; John Polachek cast and finished the bronze work.

Measuring 274' x 124', the Memorial Court is a terrace paved with concrete and pebble aggregate. The shaft is located at its center and flanked on the west by the Museum and on the east by Memory Hall. The deck is reached by the Memorial Mall to the south and by a series of steps, each 24' wide with retaining walls 22' deep, at the east and west. The central portion of the deck is placed at a lower level than the flanking buildings, while a raised walkway shielded by a continuous parapet runs the expanse of the north side. Raised garden plots, anchored at each corner, break the otherwise stark character of the immense deck.

Memory Hall and the Museum Building

Each flat-roofed limestone building, placed at either end of the Memorial Court, measures 46' x 93' and are similarly designed with few exceptions. Originally called the Legion Building, Memory Hall lies to the east and the Museum Building is sited to the west. The main façade of each facility, facing onto the court towards the shaft, features a two-story barrel-vaulted portico reached by a brief series of limestone steps through paired, square limestone piers faced with classically inspired pilasters. The porticos are lined with polychromatic mosaic tile ranging from dark blue at the top to a light blue at the base and bordered by a checkerboard pattern of black and gold. Two large ornamental bronze sconces, decorated with laurel and ivy, are placed at the inside of each portico on each pier. Entrances to the buildings are symmetrically placed, bronze-framed double-leaf plate glass doors with transoms and unadorned molded limestone entablature surrounds. Non-original open design wrought-iron security gates protect each entrance. Flanking the entrance steps of each building is a pair of rose-colored polished terrazzo marble urns measuring 10' in height and 6' in diameter. A band of laurel encircles each urn with emblems of the Army, the Navy, and the Red Cross, in recognition of each of the branches of service that aided in the war effort.

The north and south façades of Memory Hall and the Museum Building feature six recessed openings with large limestone piers, like those of the main façade, separating the bays. The upper portion of each recess is lined with mosaic tile similar to that of the main portico. Multi-paned metal casement windows (six-light) are placed in the lower sections of each recess and additionally at the west façade of the Museum Building. One-over-one hopper units are placed at the far-west bay of the north and south façades of Memory Hall and at the end bays and below each window recess of the Museum Building. A series of surface-mounted copper light receptacles, placed on the north and south façades of each building, illuminate the lower walls and steps. The Museum building also features two fireproof single-leaf doors at the north façade; one at the far east bay leading to the museum archives and offices, and a second at the far west bay for access to the storage area. At the east façade of Memory Hall, the Arms of the United States are featured and at the west façade of the Museum Building, the Arms of the State of Missouri are displayed. Both symbols, carved in high relief and centrally arranged in the upper-most quadrant of each façade, feature stylized heraldic eagles.

The interior of Memory Hall measures 73'-04" in length, 37'-06" wide and 27'-03" in height, at the highest point of the coffered and non-original acoustic tile ceiling. Geometric bands of foliation studded with stars of Dutch gold separate the tiles. Walls, originally of French Caen stone ground into plaster and scored, are now covered with acoustic tile; floors are linomosaic.² On the walnut wainscot of the north, east, and south walls are a series of twenty-five war maps, painted by D. Putnam Brinley, illustrating the American Army and Navy in foreign territory, U.S. military training camps, and convoy system.³ Dominating the upper portion of the easterly wall is a mural painting, *In Memoriam, 1914-1918*, measuring 17' in height by 36' in length by the artist Jules Guerin.⁴ The works by Brinley and Guerin are the only paintings that were originally part of Memory Hall.

Covering the west wall of Memory Hall above the entrance is the mural *Dedication of the Memorial Site November 1, 1921*, measuring 33' in width x 16' in height, depicting portraits of the five

² The acoustic tile resembles stone, creating a *trompe l'oeil* effect.

³ Originally there were 27 maps installed in Memory Hall, but due to damage from a steam radiator, two of the canvases were removed from the southeast corner of the interior.

⁴ Guerin, a native of St. Louis, was the artist of the mural decorations in the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C. Daniel MacMorris repainted the mural in 1955.

Allied leaders and more than 100 Kansas Citians who were present at the original dedication for Liberty Memorial. The huge canvas, the work of Kansas City artist Daniel MacMorris, was dedicated on May 30, 1950. MacMorris was also responsible for the following paintings in Memory Hall: *Blood of Mother's Tears Given for a Star of Gold* located on the east end of the south wall and measuring 16' x 9' (1970); *Women of World War I*, a mural placed centrally on the south wall and measuring 16' x 21' (1955); *Hope like a Blue Star Kept Mothers Faith Alive* at the west end of the south wall (1970); and *Pantheon de la Guerre*, a 1914-1918 mural reworked by the artist and hung on the north wall in 1959.⁵ Further embellishing Memory Hall are four bronze tablets, bearing the names of the 440 sons and one daughter of Kansas City who died in World War I, located at either side of the entrance, which is crowned by a patterned lunette. Six walnut benches are placed throughout the perimeter, in addition to six bronze torchère uplights.

Concluding the list of decorative features of the interior of Memory Hall is a bronze door, decorated with ivy and commemorating the American Legion. It contains the following inscription:

FOR
GOD AND COUNTRY
WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES
TOGETHER FOR THE FOLLOWING

PURPOSES:
TO UPHOLD AND DEFEND
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES:
TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER:
TO FOSTER AND PERPETUATE
ONE HUNDRED PERCENT AMERICANISM:
TO PRESERVE THE MEMORIES AND INCIDENTS
OF OUR ASSOCIATION IN THE GREAT WAR:
TO INCULCATE A SENSE OF INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATION
TO THE COMMUNITY, STATE AND NATION:
TO COMBAT THE AUTOCRACY OF BOTH

⁵ Pierre Carrier-Belleuse and Auguste-François Gourguet conceived the painting *Pantheon De la Guerre*, a traveling cyclorama hung like a huge curtain in a circle. The enormous canvas, originally sized over 45' high and 402' in length, was the work of more than 120 French artists over a four-year period. The World War I mural completed in 1918, was given to the Liberty Memorial Association by a Baltimore collector, William H. Haussner. Haussner gave permission to revise the painting for installation and subsequently, MacMorris rearranged the piece by cutting, pasting and reworking sections. The portion that hangs in Memory Hall contains sections of the original work comprised of Belgian, Serbian, Russian, Italian, American, and Asian forces and participants. For more detailed information regarding the painting, and other artworks in Memory Hall and the Museum Building, see Evergreene Painting Studios, Inc. "Liberty Memorial Study, Liberty Memorial Kansas City, Missouri," November 1999.

THE CLASSES AND THE MASSES:
TO MAKE RIGHT THE MASTER OF MIGHT:
TO PROMOTE PEACE AND GOOD WILL ON EARTH:
TO SAFEGUARD AND TRANSMIT TO POSTERITY
THE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY:
TO CONSECRATE AND SANCTIFY OUR COMRADESHIP
BY OUR DEVOTION TO MUTUAL HELPFULNESS

The interior of the Museum Building was originally designed to feature the same floor materials as Memory Hall and is dimensioned the same. As it appears today, the walls of the exhibit space have been covered with acoustic tile and painted black; the original ceiling has been modified with acoustic tile and florescent lighting. Wainscoting is comprised of light gray marble. The flags of the nations involved in the Great War are placed below the ceiling. One of the most elaborate features of the Museum Building are the paired bronze doors, embellished with intricately detailed panels of symbolic images of peace and war, justice, prosperity and learning, knowledge and eternity.⁶ The doors were designed by F. Lynn Jenkins and executed by John Polachek, of New York. A section of the mammoth mural *Pantheon de la Guerre* hangs on the east wall.⁷

Above the doors at the east end is an inscription from Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms declaring:

ONLY TAKE HEED TO THYSELF AND KEEP THY SOUL DILIGENTLY LEST THOU FORGET THE THINGS WHICH THINE EYES HAVE SEEN AND LEST THEY DEPART FROM THY HEART ALL THE DAYS OF THY LIFE: BUT TEACH THEN THY SONS AND THY SON'S SONS: : HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS ARE THE FEET OF HIM THAT PUBLISHETH PEACE: : AND HE SHALL JUDGE AMONG THE NATIONS AND SHALL REBUKE MANY PEOPLES: AND THEY SHALL BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOUGH-SHARES AND THEIR SPEARS INTO PRUNING HOOKS: NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANY MORE: EXCEPT THE LORD KEEP THE CITY THE WATCHMAN WAKETH BUT IN VAIN.

The Great Frieze

The Great Frieze is reached from the north lawn or from a series of steps, 30' wide, leading from the Memorial Court at the east and west ends to broad terrace landings with broad planters on either side and finally to a large forecourt in front of the frieze. The wall of the Great Frieze measures 488' long x

⁶ For a complete description of the bronze doors, see C. Kevin McShane, "A History of the Liberty Memorial," Masters thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1969, 71.

⁷ This section includes the Winged Victory with French heroes and leaders. See fn. 5.

approximately 43' high; the carved figures occupy a space measuring 145' x 19', modified from the original plan (see history section below). Wight and Wight, the prominent architectural firm from Kansas City, working with the Olmsted Brothers, designed the frieze, as well as the terracing, walls, and steps. Under the direction of Wight and Wight, Edmond Amateis assisted in design particulars and executed the sculpture. Combining images of the horrors of war and the fruits of industry and peace, the Great Frieze is also characterized by an inscription, in bas relief, 14" high and running the entire length of the narrative:

THESE HAVE DARED BEAR THE TORCHES OF SACRIFICE AND SERVICE—THEIR
BODIES RETURN TO DUST BUT THEIR WORK LIVETH FOR EVERMORE. LET US
STRIVE ON TO DO ALL WHICH MAY ACHIEVE AND CHERISH A JUST AND LASTING
PEACE AMONG OURSELVES AND WITH ALL NATIONS.

At the eastern half of the frieze, images of war are contrasted with symbols of peace at the western half. The central figure, that of a woman with spread wings, symbolizes peace and understanding. Four men huddle beneath the wings; two figures with their heads bowed face east towards the memories of war, while the other pair gaze west, with uplifted heads, toward everlasting peace. Beginning at the far east panel, a series of five poses depicting war is composed of the following: two soldiers holding a wounded comrade, three soldiers with bayonets, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, a nurse aiding three injured soldiers, and finally a grieving family gazing toward the central figure of peace. Moving from the central figure toward the west, is a group of women engaged in music and song, a family (and the addition of a judge) awaiting the return of a soldier, a group that depicts "Poetry" and "Music" riding on two bulls, a farmer and his family beside a ram, and at the far west end, a single figure of a working man juxtaposed with a beaver and a giant wheel. Amateis further contrasted the two themes by his use of line and general carving techniques. The images of war are expressed with a more emphatic verticality and harshness; the cadence of the figures appears dramatic and rigorous, almost tense. On the other hand, the images of peace are much more fluid in characterization.

Four inscriptions are carved above the figures of the frieze, two to a side. Above the figures of the three soldiers is the following:

BEHOLD A PALE HORSE AND HIS
NAME THAT SAT ON HIM WAS DEATH
AND HELL FOLLOWED WITH HIM

The inscription above the figures of the nurse and wounded men reads:

VIOLENCE SHALL NO MORE BE HEARD
IN THY LAND WASTING NOR
DESTRUCTION WITHIN THY BORDERS

To the west of the central figure, above the two groups (moving east to west) reads the following:

WHAT DOTTH THE LORD REQUIRE OF THEE
BUT TO DO JUSTLY AND TO LOVE MERCY
AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH THY GOD

The final passage evokes a message of assurance:

THEN SHALL THE EARTH YIELD
HER INCREASE AND GOD
EVEN OUR OWN GOD SHALL BLESS US

The Memorial Fountains

Leading from the forecourt of the Great Frieze down a flight of steps 90' in width are dual fountains, also designed by Wight and Wight. Constructed in 1934-1935 on two levels, each fountain is placed in a niche composed by retaining walls. The upper tier consists of a spray ring with jets that create a waterfall that flows into the second level. Lining the bowed second tier basin is a series of jets that cast the water back to the lower pool. Currently, the fountains are not in operation. Carved above each fountain is a passage to honor those who died in the war. The inscription at the east fountain, an excerpt from *America the Beautiful* by Katherine Lee Bates, reads:

WHO MORE THAN SELF THEIR COUNTRY LOVED

At the west fountain, a quote from Sir Samuel Brydges's verse on the death of Sir Walter Scott is inscribed as follows:

THE GLORY DIES NOT AND GRIEF IS PAST⁸

⁸ Sherry Piland and Ellen Ugucioni. *Fountains of Kansas City* (Kansas City: City of Fountains, 1985), 133-34.

The Dedication Wall

At the northern edge of Liberty Memorial, located 150' south of Pershing Road, is the slightly curved Dedication Wall commemorating the site dedication held on November 1, 1921. The limestone wall itself, measuring 10' high and 90' in length carries the bronze portraits of the five Allied leaders who attended the dedication; Admiral Beatty, Marshal Foch, General Pershing, Lt. General Diaz, and General Jacques (moving from east to west). Their last names are carved into a ribbon-like banner beneath their portraits. Beneath the wall is a limestone bench. Wight and Wight planned for the wall in February 1934. It appears that its construction was completed in 1935; reconstruction of the wall, complete with concrete terrace and limestone stairs, occurred in 1999-2000. Walker Hancock, of Gloucester, Massachusetts, was the sculptor of the portraits. From the Dedication Wall, a series of stairs lead to the north lawn of Liberty Memorial.

Carved into each end of the wall which features the busts are two quotes; one from John J. Pershing and another by Woodrow Wilson. The authors' names are placed at the bottom right of each inscription. Pershing's quote, placed to the west of the portrait grouping, reads:

IN DEDICATION OF THIS MEMORIAL LET US
PLEDGE OUR LIVES TO GOD AND COUNTRY
MAY THE DEVOTION OF THOSE WHO
ANSWERED THE CALL OF DUTY IN THE
SUPREME CRISIS OF WAR PROVE AN ABIDING
INSPIRATION TO LOYALTY AND HIGH ENDEAVOR

The quote from Wilson, placed to the east, states:

THE GLORY OF AMERICA GIVES DEEPER THAN
ALL THE TINSEL GOES DEEPER THAN THE
SOUND OF GUNS AND THE CLASH OF SABERS
IT GOES DOWN TO THE VERY FOUNDATION
OF THOSE THINGS THAT HAVE MADE
THE SPIRIT OF MAN FREE HAPPY AND CONTENT

Two bronze tablets flank either end of the Dedication Wall. Both inscriptions carry the same text:

ON THIS SPOT ON THE FIRST DAY OF NOVEMBER
ONE THOUSAND AND NINE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE
DURING THE THIRD CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ASSOCIATED WAR LEADERS

FERDINAND FOCH MARSHALL OF FRANCE
ARMANDO DIAZ GENERAL OF THE ARMY OF ITALY
EARL BEATTY ADMIRAL OF THE BRITISH FLEET
BARON JACQUES LIEUTENANT GENERAL OF BELGIUM
JOHN J. PERSHING GENERAL OF THE ARMIES OF
THE UNITED STATES AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

CALVIN COOLIDGE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
ARTHUR HYDE GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI
SIXTEEN GOVERNORS OF OTHER STATES
AND A VAST MULTITUDE
WAS DEDICATED THE SITE OF THE LIBERTY MEMORIAL
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE
OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS, SAILORS AND CITIZENS
IN THE GREAT WAR

The Sphinxes

Two colossal Egyptian sphinx-like sculptures, shrouded by their wings, guard the south entrance to the Memorial Court. They were placed on the Memorial Court in September 1925. Measuring 32' x 15' x 15' and weighing 615 tons each, these immense limestone statues "prepare visitors for the spirit and mood of the shrine of sacrifice."⁹ "Memory" located on the southwest side of the court hides its head to forget the pain and suffering of war. The figure faces east toward Flanders Field, the seat of war. On the southeast side, "Future" covers its head to attest to the skepticism of things to come and faces west where "the course of Empire takes its way."¹⁰ Edgar F. Bircsak, an artist and architect who worked in Magonigle's office, designed the sphinxes.¹¹ John Donnelly was responsible for the carving.

The North Lawn and Memorial Mall

Extending south from either end of the Dedication Wall is a series of stone stairs that lead to an irregular elliptical asphalt walkway 9' in width. As envisioned by George Kessler and planned by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., the area between the Dedication wall and the lower terrace steps of the Memorial remains an unobstructed grassy lawn, rising in elevation from 90' to approximately 165'. Additional series

⁹ C. Kevin McShane, "A History of the Liberty Memorial," 68.

¹⁰ As quoted in Magonigle, "Description of the Memorial," 28.

¹¹ Sarajane Sandusky Aber, "An Architectural History of the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, 1918-1935," Master's thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1988, 59, n.8.

of stone stairways are located at the western edge of the north lawn, at elevation 135', and at the far northeast corner at elevation 90'. A flagpole rests at elevation 150', just northwest of the lower terrace. Vegetation of the north lawn includes shrubbery scattered at the stairs from the Dedication Wall, at the northeast corner, and cottonwood trees densely planted throughout the west and east sides adjacent to Main Street and Kessler Road. Walkways stretch from the north lawn to the east and west sides of the Memorial proper and continue to the South Mall. Non-original, deteriorated concrete paths also run the length of the Memorial.

The Memorial Mall is essentially a parkway featuring parallel entrance roads flanking a level grassy area. A continuous asphalt walkway borders the road. Stretching a quarter mile from the non-original dual stone bollards and iron gates at the south end, the Memorial Mall serves as the main entrance to Liberty Memorial. On either side of the road is a double row of formally planted sugar maples known as the Avenue of Trees, followed by rows of pin oaks. Sycamores, cottonwoods, and various volunteer species are also extant throughout the south lawn. Plaques dedicated to World War II veterans are located at the east side of the mall near the Avenue of Trees; no plaques have been found to exist to the west. Additional limestone stairs are located at the both the east and west fringes of the south lawn.

The 89th Division Memorial, designed by Kansas City architect Edward Buehler Delk and consisting of a 70' flagpole on a square 2' x 9" bronze plinth resting on a concrete base with three steps, is centrally placed at the inside of the entrance gate on the lawn. The plinth features inscriptions and portraits in bas-relief, while a gold leaf eagle crowns the flagpole. The 89th Division Memorial was dedicated in 1948.

The Current Condition of the Liberty Memorial

There are two minor cracks in the limestone exterior of both Memorial Hall and the Museum Building. The North Frieze exhibits many cracks immediately outside the frieze area on the east and west ends. Although the exterior of the Memorial shaft is in good condition, the interior stairway and elevator are in need of repair. The Memorial Court has deteriorated. The sphinxes are generally in good condition, but show signs of biological growth. Twenty-percent of the stairs of Liberty Memorial, proper, are in poor

condition and the majority of the site stairs are in deteriorated condition. The fountains are not operable and basins need repair.

Future Plans

The Liberty Memorial will be restored and expanded beginning in summer 2000, with partial completion scheduled for November 11, 2001. ASAI Architecture, Kansas City, Missouri, has prepared drawings for the Memorial. All work on the Memorial shall be conducted in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards* for historic properties. The work will include the restoration of all historic components of the Memorial, and the deteriorated structural system will be replaced with one that will be more durable. This will allow for the expansion of the Liberty Memorial Museum in the vast space below the Observation Deck. Adaptive rehabilitation will update the facilities to meet current laws and criteria related to accessibility, security, lighting, and environmental controls, all in a manner that preserves the integrity of the original design.

A complete list of architects, landscape architects, artists, engineers and contractors and builders associated with the Liberty Memorial (for details of specific work, see previous narrative):

Harold Van Buren Magonigle, New York	Architect
Westlake Construction Company, St. Louis	Construction Contractors
Hool and Johnson, New York	Engineers
Wight and Wight, Kansas City	Architects
Olmsted Brothers, Brookline, Massachusetts	Landscape Architects
George E. Kessler, Kansas City	Landscape Architect
Robert Aitken, New York	Artist; Guardian Angels
Edmund Amateis, New York	Artist; The Great Frieze
Walter Hancock, New York	Artist; Dedication Wall
Edgar Bircsak, New York	Artist; Sphinxes

Angelo Taglibue (John Donnelly Inc., New York)

Artist; bronze work

John Polachek, New York

Artist; bronze work

F. Lynn Jenkins, New York

Artist; bronze work

Walker Hancock, Gloucester, Massachusetts

Artist

Jules Guerin, New York

Artist; mural painting

D. Putnam Brinley, New York

Artist; decorative maps

Daniel MacMorris, Kansas City

Artist; murals

Pierre Carrier-Belleuse, France

Artist; mural

Auguste-François Gourguet, France

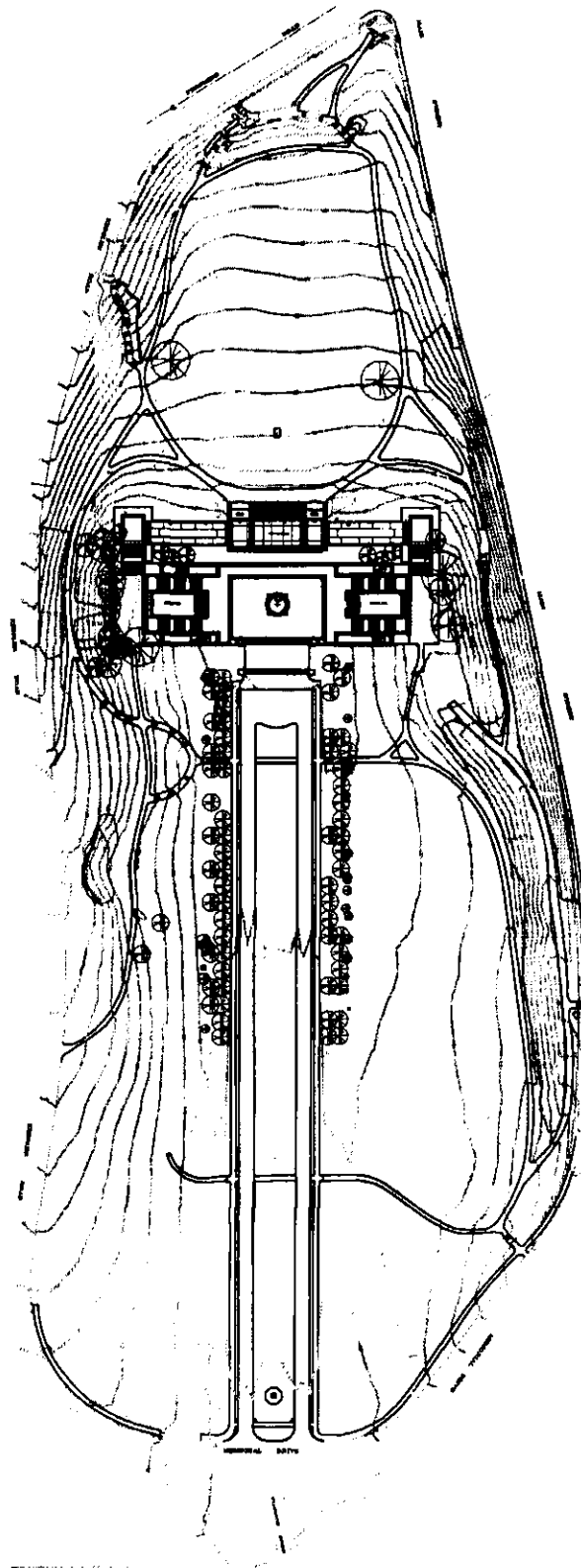
Artist; mural

Edward Buehler Delk, Kansas City

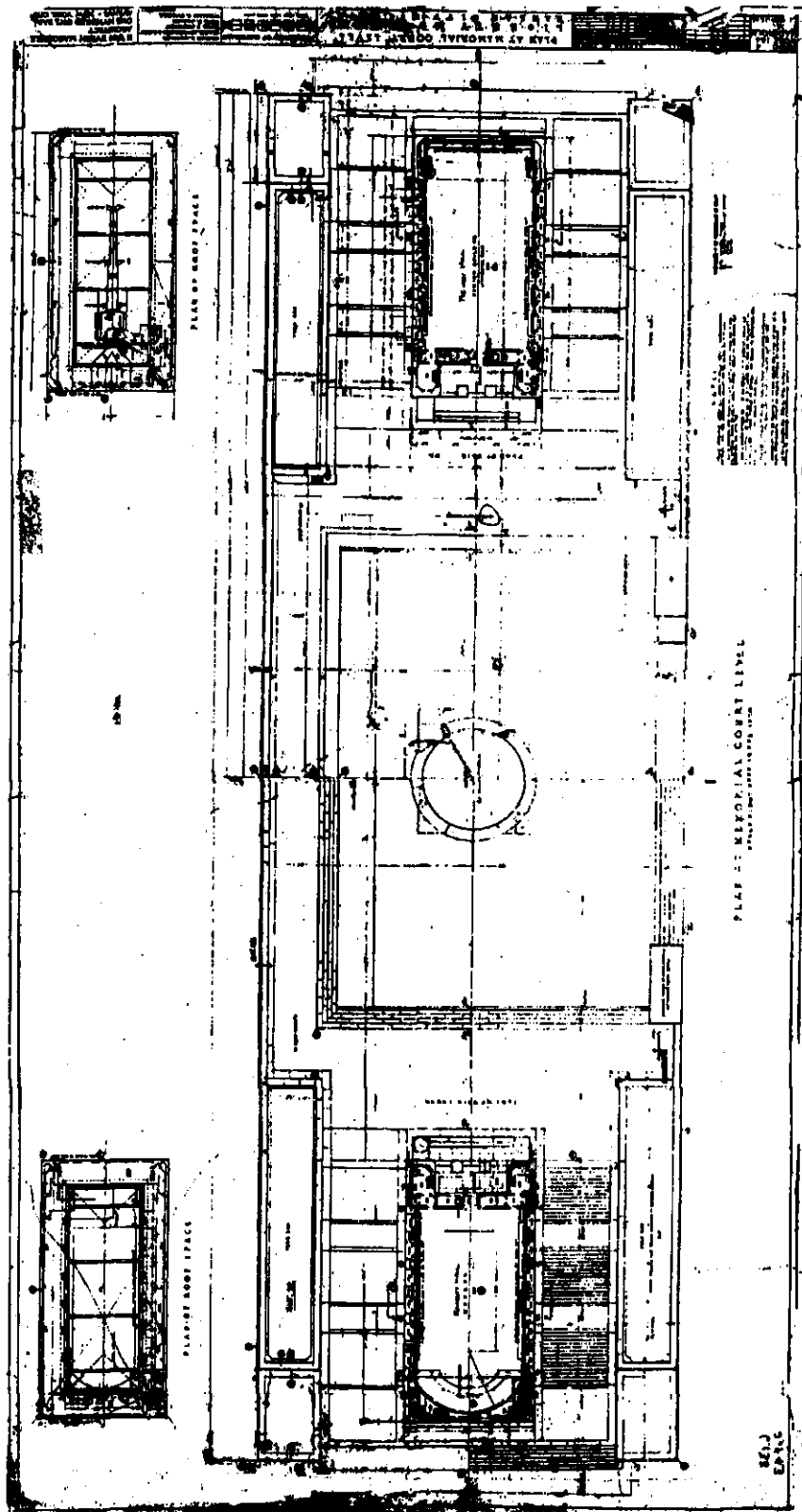
Architect; 89th Division Memorial

Sterling Bronze Company

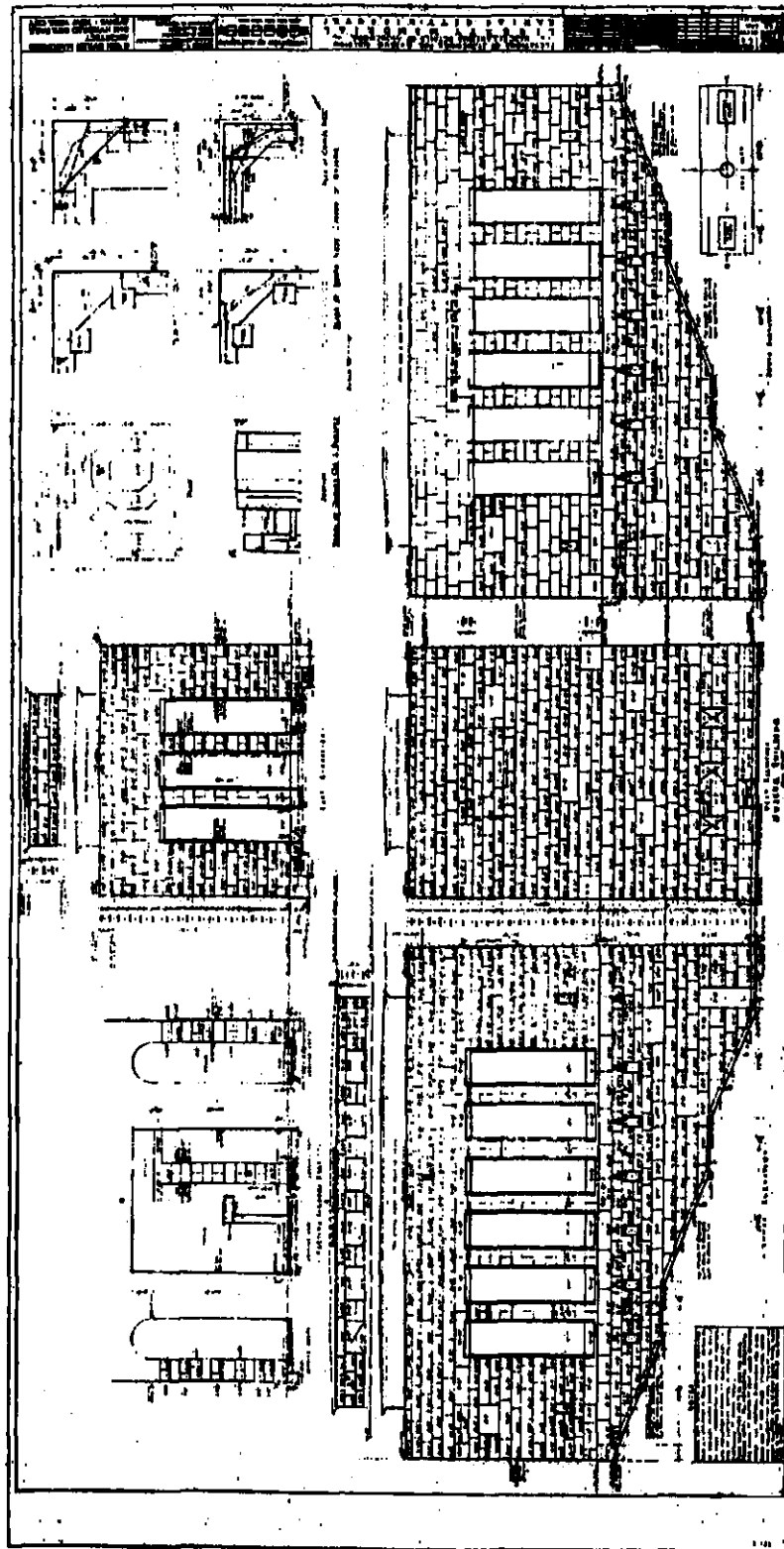
Suppliers; lighting fixtures



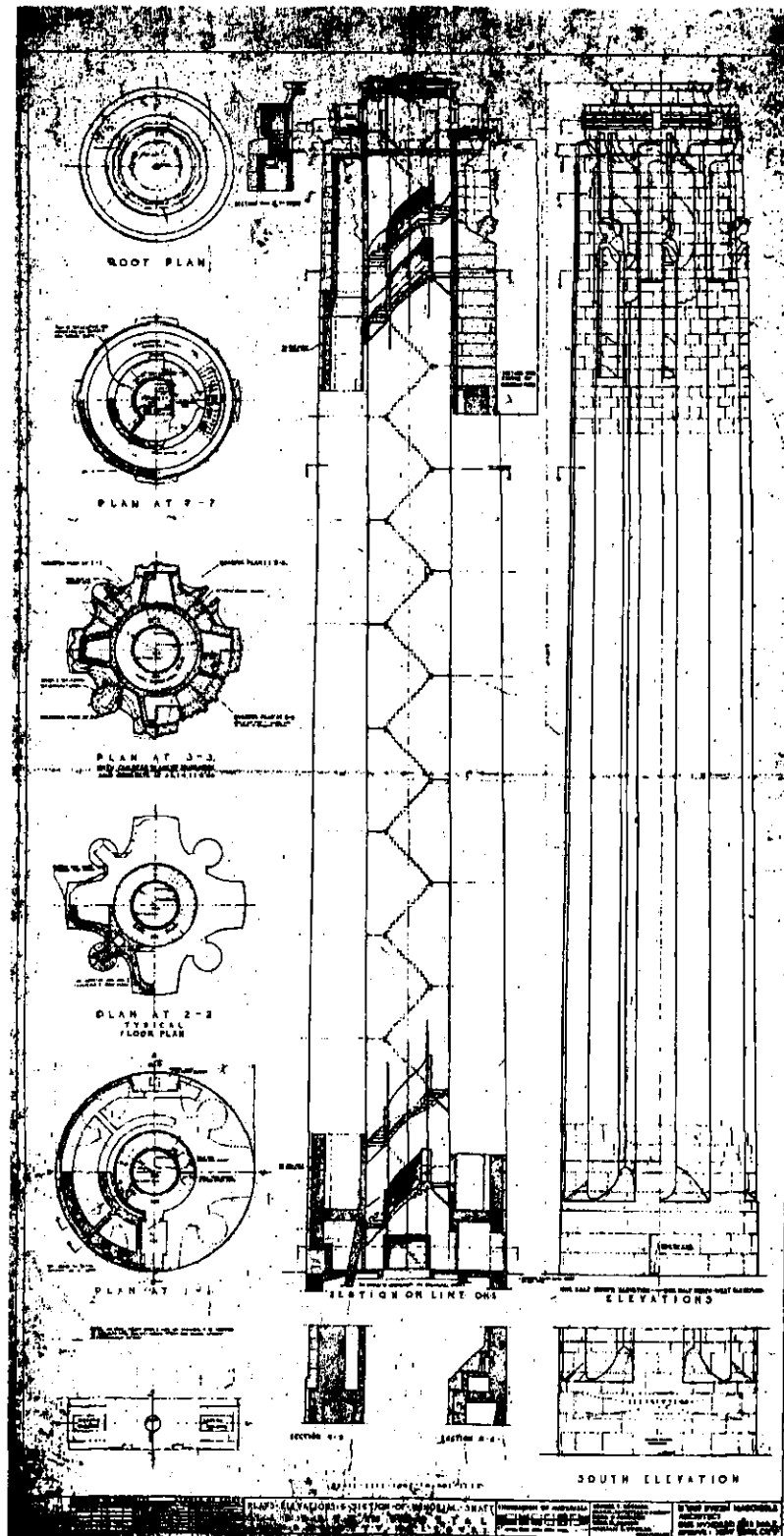
Site plan. Liberty Memorial
Source: ASAI Architects, Kansas City, Missouri



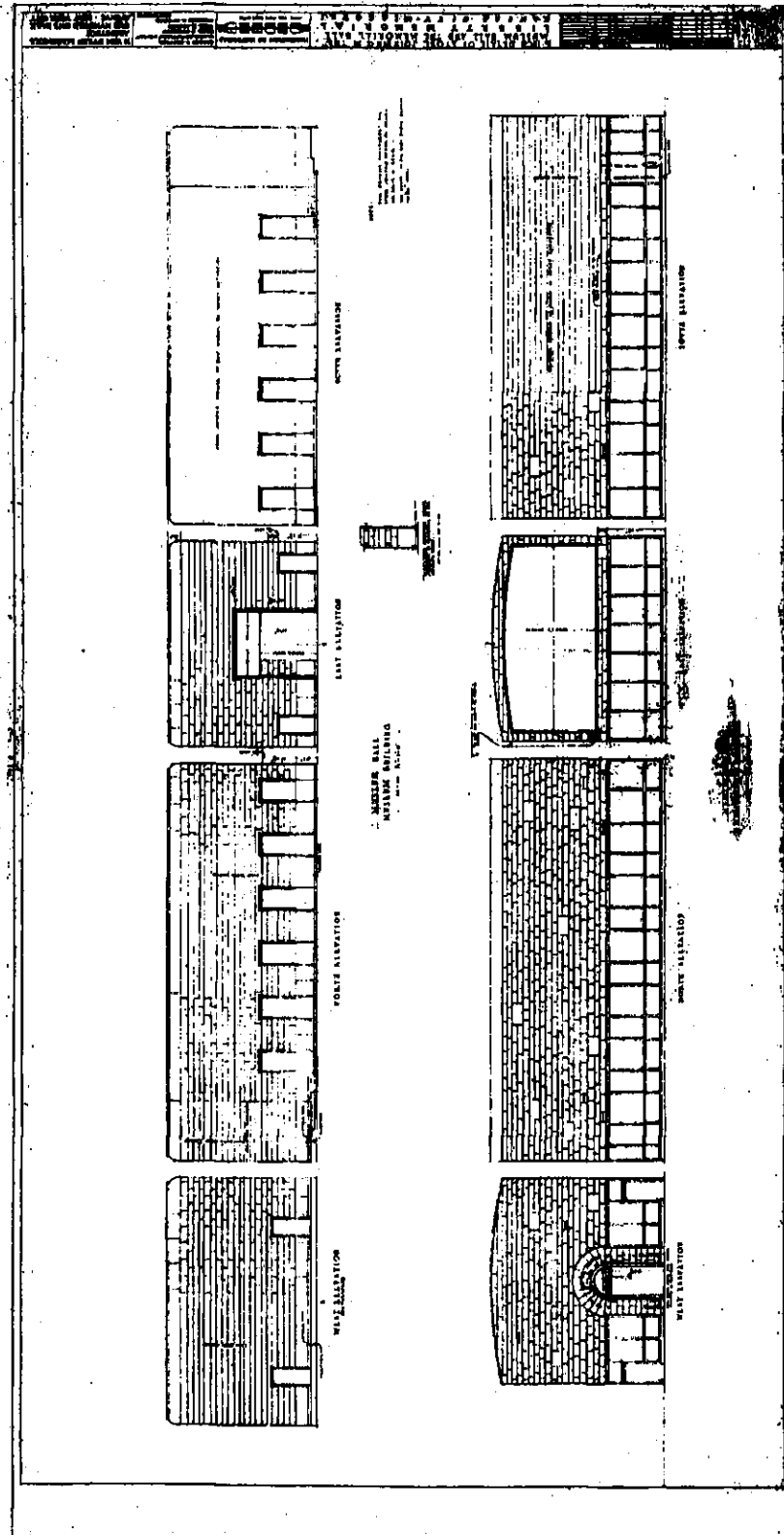
Plan at Memorial Court Level
Source: Avery Library, Columbia University, New York, NY



Elevations of stonework for Museum Building
Source: Avery Library, Columbia University, New York, NY



Plans, elevations and section of Memorial shaft
Source: Avery Library, Columbia University, New York, NY



Detail of stone jointing in the Museum Hall and the Memorial Hall
Source: Avery Library, Columbia University, New York, NY

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE

This courage and loyalty so splendidly shown, this honor for which these patriots sacrificed their lives and their material interests—it is the memory of these which must be our inspiration for life in the new world revealed to us by the World War. Therefore this memorial shaft signifies: The Flame of Inspiration, guarded by the Spirits of Honor, Courage Patriotism and Sacrifice, burning forever upon an altar-high erected in the skies, a pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night, to lead men out of the bondage of strife into the promised land of Peace and the blessings of peace.

H. Van Buren Magonigle, 1929

Summary

The Liberty Memorial, 100 West 26th Street, Kansas City, Missouri, constructed from 1923 to 1938, is nationally significant for its architecture, landscape architecture, and art. Designed by architects H. Van Buren Magonigle with Wight and Wight; landscape architects George E. Kessler, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., (Olmsted Brothers), with Hare and Hare; and artists to include Robert Aitken and Edmond Amateis, Liberty Memorial vividly exemplifies the fulfillment of city planning concepts, combining monumentally scaled Beaux Arts Classicism envisioned by some of the nation's most notable and diverse delineators of the City Beautiful Movement working in the early twentieth century. Liberty Memorial's complex of limestone buildings, together with the towering shaft, vast sculpture, bas-reliefs, decorative bronze art, and dramatic open vistas, all contribute to its power and distinction. Today it stands as one of the most important landmarks in Kansas City and one of the most commanding memorial sites in the nation. Moreover, Liberty Memorial remains one of the nation's most compelling monuments to those who sacrificed their lives during World War I and a remembrance of those who survived. Its dramatic combination of elements is not only a momentous tribute to those veterans but also an important expression of American memorial architecture of the early twentieth century. Additionally, the Liberty Memorial houses the only public World War I museum in the United States. Noted post-war architect Edward Durrell Stone claimed, "It is one of the country's great memorials, in a class with the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials. It is like the Acropolis in Athens, with its great wall setting or like the monumental planning of Paris."¹²

¹² Rededication Committee of the Liberty Memorial. *The Liberty Memorial Rededication* (Kansas City: Glenn Printing Company, 1961), 17.

Early Planning and Development of the Memorial, 1918-1920

Before the Armistice ending World War I was signed on November 11, 1918, citizens of Kansas City, Missouri, were eager to commemorate the great sacrifice for freedom. These concerns and ideas were given public voice in the local press and the general call was made for the construction of a victory monument, appropriately honoring local participants in the war effort.¹³ Strong public sentiment prompted the City Council and local city leaders to enter into preliminary considerations for a memorial. Robert Alexander Long, one of these civic leaders and a successful lumber businessman, emerged as a major player in the organization of a group of citizens dedicated to the development of a war memorial project.¹⁴

The City Council announced a public conference to be held on November 29, 1918. Invitations were sent to notable citizens regarding this meeting. At the Council's request, R.A. Long presided over the forum. Mayor James Cowgill and his Council had called the meeting "[f]or the purpose of arranging for an appropriate memorial expressing the appreciation of the people of Kansas City, Missouri, of the service and sacrifice of the soldiers, sailors, and citizens . . ."¹⁵ At the meeting, R.A. Long was authorized to appoint a Committee of 100 and a temporary advisory Committee of 150, whose members would meet jointly to initiate the memorial movement. Members of the Joint Committee would include citizens who actively participated in civic work, selected without political or religious preferences.¹⁶

Another meeting was held on December 12, 1918, to discuss a formal name for the project. Many proposals were set forth including a Patriots War Memorial, Heroes War Memorial, World War Memorial, Victory Memorial, Democracy War Memorial, World War Liberty Memorial, and Victory and Peace

¹³ Celbe C. Cline, *Kansas City Journal*, 9 November 1918, Mounted Clipping File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri. Many of the newspaper articles from this repository do not include page numbers and dates. In addition, a voluminous record of contemporary press clippings, compiled by Liberty Memorial Association Secretary, J.E. McPherson, is reserved in the Liberty Memorial Museum Library and Archives. Like that of the Missouri Valley Room, most of these clippings also do not include page numbers and dates. The Liberty Memorial Museum Library and Archives, Kansas City, Missouri, will be hereafter cited as Liberty Memorial Archives.

¹⁴ Long served as Chairman and President of the Association from 1918 until his retirement in 1926, at which time the Association awarded him with the title of Honorary President.

¹⁵ The Liberty Memorial Association and J. E. McPherson, *The Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri*, 5.

¹⁶ C. Kevin McShane, "A History of the Liberty Memorial," Masters thesis, 7-8.

Memorial.¹⁷ Frank P. Sebree cautioned that the decision should not be hastily made and Jesse Clyde Nichols suggested that the name itself might "have an effect on the success of the enterprise."¹⁸ Dr. Burris Jenkins proposed the incorporation of "liberty," as the word was often used in connection with the war.¹⁹ Whether the memorial should emphasize war or peace was also debated. The Memorial Committee resolved on this date to consider public opinion prior to naming the memorial and its organization.²⁰ Another issue of business considered at this meeting was the general outline of the committee—its character, purpose, and structure.

The name Liberty Memorial Association was selected at the December 16, 1919, meeting. R.A. Long, as Chairman of the Association, then appointed the 100 citizens to serve on the Committee of 100.²¹ This group would eventually be incorporated under Missouri State statutes into a legal entity, the Board of Trustees, to administer the development and construction of the Memorial.²² In order to represent all voices, a temporary advisory committee of 150 citizens was also appointed at this meeting.²³ Together as the Joint Committee, the group of 100 and the advisory group of 150 were to encourage public suggestions, seek professional advice, hold open forums to disseminate information, and above all, to determine the character, location, cost, and all collateral matters of the Memorial. One thing, however, was already decided—the Liberty Memorial Association wanted a beautiful and original monument. Not only would such a memorial express the gratitude and honor Kansas Citizens felt towards their lost ones who sacrificed for peace, but it was also understood that civic beauty reflected civic activity and growth.²⁴

¹⁷ Minutes of the Liberty Memorial Association, Liberty Memorial Archives, 6, which will be hereafter cited as "Minutes."

¹⁸ "Minutes," 6. Sebree was an attorney and served as President of the Kansas City Park Board. J.C. Nichols was a leading Kansas City real estate investor with a personal interest in civic affairs.

¹⁹ "Minutes," 7. Dr. Burris A. Jenkins was a long-time Kansas City minister, former editor of the *Kansas City Post* and author of more than a dozen books.

²⁰ "Minutes," 6-7. For more on the contemporary concern about haste in regards to war memorials, see *New York Times*, 24 January 1919; *New York Evening Post*, 7 February 1919; "War Memorials," *Art Digest* 15 April 1931, n.p.; and *New York Times*, 27 November 1918.

²¹ A list of these members is included in The LMA and J.E. McPherson, *The Liberty Memorial*, 21.

²² J.E. McPherson, "The Liberty Memorial of Kansas City, Missouri," *Apollo: Journal of the Arts* 6 (September 1927): 104, and J.E. McPherson, "A Pillar of Cloud and Fire," *Executive's Magazine* 11 (June 1927): 39.

²³ The concern for public opinion was strong throughout the organizational phases of the memorial.

²⁴ LMA and McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 15. The influence of the City Beautiful movement was evident.

From January 16 through March 21, 1919, thirteen Joint Committee meetings were held, despite an influenza epidemic that closed the local public schools and led the City Health Department to ban large gatherings.²⁵ These meetings were held to acquire information on notable war monuments, the significance of various architectural types, to consult expert advice, and ultimately ensure that committee members made informed decisions concerning the Memorial.²⁶ The Association consulted Thomas R. Kimball, former President of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), regarding these aims. His expert advice led the Association to invite some of the most prominent figures in memorial design and architecture to address the Joint Committee meetings. Nationally known sculptor Lorado Taft was invited to give a presentation. Although Taft was unable to attend, Nellie V. Walker, a sculptor from his Chicago Midway studio, was sent in his place.²⁷ Chicago architects Dwight H. Perkins and Jarvis Hunt, as well as the New York architect Harold Van Buren Magonigle, also spoke to the Joint Committee.²⁸

Subsequently, important decisions began to be made. In March 1919, the Liberty Memorial Association decided that the monument would be located in Kansas City, Missouri, regardless of suggestions otherwise.²⁹ The Joint Committee proceeded cautiously in determining what form the

²⁵ From September through December 1918, it was reported that approximately 1800 Kansas Citizens died from influenza and pneumonia. The death rate in 1917 was 205.0, whereas for 1919, it jumped to 301.1. *United States Mortality Statistics, 1920* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), 30.

²⁶ R.A. Long, "Kansas City's Liberty Memorial," unpublished typescript in the Liberty Memorial Archives, 1921, unpaginated.

²⁷ Lorado Taft (1860-1936), was the author of *The History of American Sculpture* (1903), the first history of its kind, and a leading American sculptor schooled in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts tradition. He taught and lectured at the Art Institute of Chicago. On January 30, 1919, Miss Walker presented stereopticon slides of existing war memorials. "Minutes," 115.

²⁸ Perkins, senior member of Perkins, Fellows, and Hamilton Architectural Firm, delivered an address on memorials and a review of notable monuments in history on February 28. Hunt, the architect of Kansas City's Union Station, the National Bank of Commerce Building, and the William Rockhill Nelson Memorial Chapel, presented on March 6. Magonigle reiterated the Joint Committee's emphasis on beauty and discussed the historical evolution of memorial monuments, including several of his own designs, and advised the committee to first secure funding and then select an architect, on March 13. "Minutes," 54, 80, 97, 107, 112, 115-116.

²⁹ Citizen Frank Titus suggested a regional memorial, inviting neighboring states to participate in the Liberty Memorial enterprise. Frank Titus, "Reasons for the Liberty War Memorial of Kansas City Becoming a Regional Movement of the Trans-Mississippi States," no date of publication, 6-8, as received by the Kansas City Public Library on March 24, 1927, and noted in McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 12.

monument should take. They feared that by constructing a utilitarian building, the Association would not adequately honor the war casualties and effort.³⁰ And, again, the fear of haste and ill-informed decisions resulting in one of those "cemetery-like" monuments remained foremost in the minds of the Association.³¹

At a meeting on April 3, 1919, the Joint Committee took a formal ballot, which listed seven possible monument types for the Memorial. The seven types were: "A Monument; A Monument Plus A Building; A Monumental Building Without Shaft; A Memorial Building With Shaft Or Other Monumental Feature; A Memorial Building Without Shaft Or Other Feature; A Memorial University, Plus A Monument; A Memorial University, Without Monument."³² In a nearly unanimous decision, a "Monument Plus A Building, not for utilitarian purposes" was selected. This vote, however, was only to decide the general character of the Memorial, leaving the design open to the originality and inspiration of the architect.³³

With the general type of monument resolved, the Association proceeded to discuss the amount of money required for the construction of a beautiful and commensurate memorial. All members agreed that indeed, no matter the cost, the Memorial must befit the cause. A subcommittee on Finance proposed \$2,000,000. R.A. Long strongly supported this sum, while others were surprised and thought it exceedingly large. From spring until October, publicity fueled civic sentiment and enthusiasm in preparation for the fund drive. The financial campaign was held for a mere 10 days, beginning October 27 and ending November 5, 1919, and as a result, a total of \$2,051,506.57 was procured by popular subscription.³⁴ The campaign was endorsed by over a quarter of Kansas City's population of 300,000. The

³⁰ Several groups within the community suggested utilitarian memorials. The Merchants Association of Kansas City proposed building a stadium in Penn Valley Park. Letter from the Merchants Association of Kansas City to the Liberty Memorial Association, March 25, 1919, and "Minutes," 41. The War Camp Community Service submitted a proposal for a community building with facilities for boxing, wrestling, fencing, and swimming. Letter from Henry F. Burt, Executive Secretary of the War Camp Community Service to the Liberty Memorial Association, December 14, 1918, and "Minutes," 43.

³¹ *Art Digest*, 15 April 1931, n.p. The Municipal Art Society of New York issued a pamphlet just after the war, calling attention to the problem of poorly conceived war memorials. The Society suggested 32 architectural types appropriate for war memorials, including beacons, museums, and shafts. *Bulletin of the Municipal Art Society of New York*, First Quarter, 1919, and "Minutes," 91.

³² Aber, "An Architectural History of the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, 1918-1935," Fig. 1 Ballot, p. 143 ("Minutes," 177).

³³ J.E. McPherson, *Executive's Magazine* 6 (June 1927), 12.

³⁴ A newspaper quoted Liberty Memorial Association member, J.C. Nichols' exclamation, "The eyes of the Middle West—if not the entire United States—focused on Kansas City. . . [and] the biggest undertaking an American city ever has attempted." *Kansas City Journal*, 3 November 1919.

press recorded an "almost religious fervor" during the campaign, "with ministers urging their congregations to contribute, bells tolling, and school children parading. It was a demonstration 'without parallel.'"³⁵

Next on the Association's agenda was to determine a site for the Memorial. While several locations throughout the city had been suggested, the favored and selected site was the park area south of the Union Station Plaza.³⁶ Recommended by a Subcommittee on Location on January 24, 1920, this site included 132 acres of Penn Valley Park, an 8-1/2-acre area called Station Park, and a 33-acre tract to the southwest of Station Park, acquired by the city through condemnation proceedings for park purposes.³⁷ The total 173-1/2 acres for the site was especially noted for its commanding elevation of 134' above the Station Plaza, its accessibility to the center of the population, and its varied and picturesque topography.

Architect Selection/Competition, 1920-1921

The Liberty Memorial Association, by the end of January 1920, had determined what form the monument would take, secured the necessary funds, and agreed upon a location. The selection of a Memorial architect was considered at this time. The Association retained Thomas Kimball as their official architectural advisor in March 1920. He conferred with a subcommittee on Architect, chaired by Henry M.

³⁵ Aber, "An Architectural History," 9; J.E. McPherson, "Kansas City's Liberty Memorial," Part 1, *Arts and Decoration* 15 (June 1921): 98.

³⁶ Swope Park was the only other seriously considered site. Given to the city in 1896 by Thomas Swope, the area contained over 1300 acres, had a rolling landscape, and was located far to the southeast of downtown. William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1964): see especially 100-119. The development scheme included everything south of the terminal tracks and north of 24th Street, and from Grand Avenue (now Boulevard) west to Broadway. In 1907 Kansas City landscape architect George Kessler had presented his original plan for a civic center at this same site. R.A. Long's interest in the site also went back several years. He and J.C. Nichols had studied the area with the idea of beautifying the "Front Door" of the Union Station. *Ibid.*

³⁷ Penn Valley Park, part of the original 1893 parks and boulevard plan for Kansas City, was designed by the brilliant landscape architect George E. Kessler, who envisioned and designed the city's celebrated parks and boulevard system. The Kansas City Railway Company had previously deeded Station Park land to the city under the provision that the property would only be used for park purposes, controlled by the Park Board. The Railway owners had originally bought this land to prevent any eyesore from developing across from the Union Station. See McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 24. Condemnation proceedings were begun by the city on October 11, 1920. The jury allotted damages of nearly \$1,000,000 to the owners. Due to the voluntary advancement of funds and purchase of 40% of this area by some of the Association members, the total cost of the condemnation procedures was considerably less than expected. See the Liberty Memorial Association and McPherson, *The Liberty Memorial*, 8. This arrangement brought the Park Board directly in on the development of the Memorial grounds. The Board would later play a significant role in the landscape beautification and completion of the Memorial.

Beardsley, whose responsibility was to enlist the most competent architectural talent available. To this end, Kimball organized a competition, open to all local architects and certain invited architects from across the country, who were distinguished by their accomplishments and many notable architectural achievements.³⁸ During the summer of 1920, sixty-three Kansas City architects were asked to nominate professional colleagues of national repute, to whom competition invitations would be sent.

Kimball's program specifically provided that a competent and unbiased jury is selected. The Liberty Memorial Association, who named W.R.B. Wilcox of Seattle, chose the first juror.³⁹ The second juror, selected by local architects, was James Gamble Rogers of New York.⁴⁰ The out-of-town architects, who had been invited to participate in the competition, elected the third juror, Louis Ayres of New York.⁴¹

The fourth juror, Henry Bacon of New York, was called upon by the first three selected jurors.⁴² The Liberty Memorial Association again decided the final jury selection. They chose John M. Donaldson of Detroit.⁴³ The pre-eminent jury members would be sequestered to review and judge the elevation drawings, perspectives, and 750-word essays submitted by the competing architects.⁴⁴ To assure against any biases influencing the final selection, the competition strictly prohibited any identifying mark of the architect on all drawings and related sheets.

³⁸ Kimball had recently achieved success for his direction of the architect's competition for the Nebraska State Capital Building. See [Charles Harris Whitaker], "Shadow and Straws," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 9 (August 1921): 250/9. On his plans for the Liberty Memorial competition, see J.E. McPherson, "The Liberty Memorial: Kansas City Plans Biggest Project of Any City," *The Kansas Citizen*, 30 August 1921, 660, and *Kansas City Times*, 28 June 1921. As an incentive to enter, the Association offered \$2,000 for each of the top four designs submitted. Uncited newspaper clipping in the Liberty Memorial Archives.

³⁹ W.R.B. Wilcox was a past president of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and had done work for the University of Vermont Agricultural College along with designing many banks, churches, and schools in New England and Seattle.

⁴⁰ James G. Rogers designed the Harkness Memorial quadrangle at Yale University and was the architect of the \$2 million building program at Columbia University in New York.

⁴¹ Louis Ayres was a member of the successful New York firm, York and Sawyer, who designed the Federal Reserve Bank in New York City, the Department of Commerce and Labor in D.C., and the First National Bank of Boston, along with many other projects.

⁴² Henry Bacon was regarded as the leading classical architect in the United States. He designed the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

⁴³ J.E. McPherson, *Executive's Magazine* 6 (June 1924), 12, and *Kansas City Post*, 24 June 1921. John Donaldson was the architect of several University of Michigan buildings and the Detroit Y.M.C.A.

⁴⁴ "Art Jury in Session to Choose Liberty Memorial Architect," *Kansas City Post*, 24 June 1921. This article included a photograph of the jurors.

According to Kimball, the competition was planned not to obtain a design, but rather to select the appropriate architect for the job. Indeed, the competition program made clear the aims of the Association, "to secure our city a Memorial that shall symbolize the dawn of a warless age, and do honor to those who died that such an age might be a human heritage . . . [and] while the monument with its symbolic purpose is the chief objective, it must be remembered that a certain part of the fund . . . is to be expended for a more or less utilitarian object."⁴⁵ While the jury's selection would be final, the Association did not have to use the winning design. Furthermore, the Association reserved the right to request that the architect amend the plan or even resubmit a new one.⁴⁶

The Association, recently incorporated as the Board of Trustees on December 27, 1920, approved Kimball's competition program, and during January of the following year, the Association prepared to receive submissions. The competition was held between February 1 and June 28, 1921, with the entry deadline set for June 15. All competition plans were kept in a sealed vault at Northeast High School, Kansas City, Missouri, and each was marked with a number for later identification. Bound with very few limitations, just like the architects, the jurors deliberated for four days. Federal Judge Arba S. VanValkenburgh secured the sealed envelope containing the architects' names until the jury was ready to announce their decision.

The list of the local competing architects included Brostrom and Drotts, Edward Buehler Delk, Greenebaum, Hardy and Schumacher, Hoit, Price and Barnes, Keene and Simpson, Selby H. Kurfiss, and Wight and Wight. The national competitors invited to submit proposals were Bliss and Faville of San Francisco, Paul P. Cret and Zanzinger, Borie and Medary of Philadelphia, Bertam G. Goodue of New York, and Harold Van Buren Magonigle.⁴⁷ While some Association members and citizens believed that since the Memorial funds had been raised by Kansas Citizens to honor Kansas City soldiers, it would be most

⁴⁵ The Liberty Memorial Association, "Program: Competition for the Selection of an Architect to Design and Supervise the Construction of A Memorial at Kansas City, Missouri, Adopted December 8, 1920 and Approved December 27, 1920," 6, 8-9.

⁴⁶ Giles Carroll Mitchell, *There Is No Limit: Architecture and Sculpture in Kansas City*, (Kansas City: Brown-White Company, 1934): 67. John G. Gamble, juror, voiced his opinions about Kansas City's planning of the competition in "Ready for Art Studies," *Kansas City Times*, 25 June 1921.

⁴⁷ The *Kansas City Star*, 4 November 1926, reported that the invited firm, York and Sawyer of New York, had to withdraw from the competition due to an overload of work.

appropriate to select a Kansas City architect, the majority felt that due to the monumental scale of the project, all efforts should be taken to obtain the best architect, local or not.⁴⁸

Late in the afternoon on June 28, 1921, the jury prepared to announce a winner. Judge VanValkenburgh provided the sealed envelope containing all the architects' names and Magonigle was awarded first place.⁴⁹ Despite those who had disapproved of a national contest, there was little to question regarding Magonigle's proven ability (see biography of Magonigle below). The architect announced his collaborators for the project at this time, including George E. Kessler, landscape architect, Edith Magonigle, painter, and Robert Aitken, sculptor.⁵⁰ Magonigle's contract with the Board was secured and the architect proceeded to make initial models of his plans in order to study the proportions and dimensions of his competition design.

The Competition Entries and Harold Van Buren Magonigle's Winning Design

Following the jury's selection, the AIA announced in their journal that "the competition...[had] brought forth a number of notably distinguished and original designs...They all show a new and wholesome, vital tendency to get away from purely traditional forms and styles to make architecture more an expression of our own times, of American ideals, of the noble purposes the memorial commemorates."⁵¹ Indeed, while all the entries reflected a sincere interest in transcending stale architectural modes, they all incorporated to varying degrees traditional elements. Each plan was distinguished by an Ecole des Beaux-Arts "look," and exhibited influences of the contemporary monumental ideas expressed in the Washington Monument, by the World's Fairs of 1893 in Chicago and of 1904 in St. Louis, and by the City Beautiful

⁴⁸ Henry F. Hoit, President of the Kansas City chapter of the AIA, was especially vocal in the protest against the invitation to national architects. He even went so far as to accuse the Association's professional advisor, Kimball, of violating AIA competition codes. See the Letter from H.F. Hoit to R. A. Long, 16 April 1919, in the Liberty Memorial Archives. Hoit's antagonism resulted in the division of Kansas City's AIA chapter, with a significant number of members leaving the chapter to form the Kansas City Architectural league. Price and Barnes, along with Greenebaum, Hardy, and Schumacher, and Keene and Simpson, who were competition participants, were included in this group. See Abers, "An Architectural History," 21-23.

⁴⁹ "Memorial Design Chosen," *Kansas City Times*, 28 June 1921. All submissions were to be hung on display at the Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, Missouri.

⁵⁰ *Kansas City Times*, 29 June 1921.

⁵¹ *Architecture* 44 (August 1921), 241.

Movement.⁵² Several of the architects conceived similar memorial-complex layouts, using the natural topography to advantage.⁵³ A brief description of each proposal in the order of its placement in the competition follows.

H. Van Buren Magonigle's winning design exhibited a thorough grasp of the ideals and problems of the project according to the jury. His descriptive text accompanying his drawings fulfilled many of the aims set forth by the Association. The architect managed to capture this "idealism that lead the youth to lay upon the altar of their country, the flaming torch of self sacrifice," through his use of great artistic styles of the past, including ancient Egyptian and Greek elements as well as Gothic architecture. Magonigle's inspired plan, rendered to perfection, detailed a grand tower rising 401' on the hill south of the Station Plaza, "so that the visitor leaving the great railroad station will pause and stand in almost awe at the . . . soaring shaft . . . [a] commanding figure of peace which rises out of the very stone of which it is a part."⁵⁴ The idea behind the tall shaft was to signify "The Flame of Inspiration...a pillar of cloud by day, [and] a pillar of fire by night."⁵⁵ It also was conceived to cast strong shadows, able to be seen from a distance, and thus, a visually interesting element beyond its symbolic significance. The Memorial was approached by wide stretches of steps and terraces that led up to the shaft. Atop the shaft was a censor, representing an altar of sacrifice. However, the original, complex design submitted by Magonigle was not exactly the same

⁵² The Chicago's World Fair of 1893, designed with the aid of architect Richard Morris Hunt and the architectural firm, McKim, Mead, and White, initiated a revival of classical taste in the arts, a new and modern reaction to the nineteenth century's Victorian ideals. The Fair's design also represented a climax of new ideas in American urban planning, a movement known as the City Beautiful Movement. See Wilson, *City Beautiful* for a discussion of the City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City. These influences appeared in an early newspaper story on the Liberty Memorial that included a drawing "showing a Columbian Exposition-type Court of Honor and a soaring Washington Monument-like shaft." Aber, "An Architectural History," 28, and *Kansas City Times*, 22 October 1919.

⁵³ See Elizabeth G. Grossman, "Two Postwar Competitions: The Nebraska State Capitol and the Kansas City Liberty Memorial," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 45 (September 1986): 261 for further analysis of the competition entries.

⁵⁴ Liberty Memorial Competition Pictures Submitted to the Liberty Memorial Association's Committee of 100, (Kansas City, 1921), in the Liberty Memorial Archives, hereafter cited as "Liberty Memorial Competition Pictures."

⁵⁵ H. V. B. Magonigle's accompanying descriptive essay to his drawings was published along with the essays by Goodhue, Cret, and Greenebaum, Hardy, and Schumacher, in "The Competition for the Liberty Memorial," *Architecture* 44 (August 1921): 235; Harold Van Buren Magonigle, "A Memorial at Kansas City, Missouri," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 9 (August 1921): 266; and "The Competition for a Memorial at Kansas City, Missouri," *Western Architects* 30 (July 1921): 70.

Liberty Memorial constructed. Many economic decisions made later resulted in a more simplified and austere, but nonetheless beautiful monument.

Second place was awarded to Paul P. Cret, a Frenchman in association with Zantzinger, Borie and Medary of Philadelphia. Like Magonigle's design, Cret planned a large frieze for the north memorial wall and referred to his tower as an "altar of sacrifice." He also beautifully integrated the hill and Station Park landscape to create a complex he compared to the Piazza del Popolo in Rome.⁵⁶ The plan, however, lacked a strong vertical element. Instead of a tall tower simply adorned with sculpture, Cret topped his design with a Statue of Liberty.

Third place was awarded to Greenebaum, Hardy and Schumacher of Kansas City. Their plan featured a tall, fluted column surrounded by terrace landscaping and cultural buildings. The sculpture program at the base of the tall column recalled ancient Roman ornament and sculpture.⁵⁷ The layout of their plan was more asymmetrical than the others, but it nonetheless retained a classical sense of stability. Greenebaum, Hardy and Schumacher placed highest among all the local entries.

Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, winner of the Nebraska State Capitol Building Competition, took fourth place. Facing south, unlike the top three designs, Goodhue's Gothic concept was a fortress-like tower highlighted by sculpture and an archway over Main Street. He advocated the use of local stone, as this was invariable for all great building programs of the past, including the Brick of Elam, the syenite of Egypt, and the pentellic marble of Athens.⁵⁸ Not nearly as tall as Magonigle's shaft, but more imposing than Cret's statue of liberty, Goodhue's design fell short of the Association's ideals.

Fifth place went to the submission by Keene and Simpson of Kansas City. Their "Altar of Peace" consisted of an open square court, surrounded by a portico of Doric columns upon a stepped base. The plan displayed no striking vertical element. The sculptural program called for relief seals on the frieze and

⁵⁶ *Architecture* 44 (August 1921), 235, and Paul Philippe Cret, "Liberty Memorial Competition Renderings, 1921," Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota. For more on Cret, see Elizabeth G. Grossman, "Paul P. Cret 1876-1945: Rationalism and Imagery in American Architecture," Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1980.

⁵⁷ More specifically, the frieze at the tower's entrance recalled the processional frieze on the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, 13-9 B.C. On the Augustan altar, see "The Augustan Sculptural Program of Cultural Renewal," in Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* trans. Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 101-166.

⁵⁸ "Liberty Memorial Competition Pictures."

modest relief panels, honoring those who had sacrificed for peace and industry. All drama was lost to the balance and order, however, creating a rather uninteresting design.

Edward Buehler Delk of Kansas City, in association with Armstrong and De Gelleke of New York, placed sixth. Delk's design was a feat in eclecticism—a tall Gothic tower topped by a winged female figure, set at the apex of the hill with Classical style temples leading down towards the Union Station. A grand staircase approached the memorial on the north. While high in drama, this plan would have no doubt been well beyond the financial limits of the Liberty Memorial Association, not unlike Magonigle's winning design.⁵⁹

Seventh place was awarded to the notable Kansas City firm of Wight and Wight. Influenced by the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., and President Lincoln's tomb in Springfield, Illinois, their memorial structure consisted of an obelisk surmounting a rather small base with four columns inset on each side. Arranged in a symmetrical pattern, six Classical-style buildings surrounded the central structure, two buildings each on the east and west sides, and one on both the north and south ends. The Neo-Classical and conservative design submitted by Thomas Wight and William Drewin Wight was the signature style of the firm as exhibited in their designs for the First National Bank (1906), the Kansas City Life Insurance Building (1923), and the Nelson Gallery of Art, now called the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art (1933).

Eighth place went to the entry submitted by Hoit, Price and Barnes, another prominent local firm. The memorial itself was similar in design to that of Wight and Wight's, only larger in scale. The layout of the memorial complex placed the main structure to the extreme south end. Seven cultural buildings in Neo-Classical style extended to the north, creating an inner rectangular field. At the south end, beyond the memorial, a semi-circular court capped the entire layout, creating a design similar to a Christian basilica-plan church. Similarities to a basilica included the inner courtyard representing the nave, the double rows of trees lining the inner east and west sides of this field as aisles, and the entrance building at the north suggestive of the narthex. The rhythm of the "nave arcade" (trees) would direct one up to the memorial itself, the "altar" in the semi-circular court or apse.

⁵⁹ Delks' design was illustrated in *Kansas City Star*, 17 July 1921.

The jury awarded Brostrom and Drotts ninth place. The Kansas City firm's design also made use of an obelisk, but rather than a square structure, the firm extended the horizontal axis of the base with an arched arcade of Doric columns. Each step and terrace leading up to the memorial represented a year or an important epic in the history of the nation. The plan also incorporated a reflecting pool to the south and an oval esplanade on the north.

The San Francisco firm of Walter D. Bliss and William B. Faville came in tenth place. Unlike the towering memorial structures in most of the competition entries, Bliss and Faville designed a large, circular court, "roofed by the dome of heaven," and surrounded by concentrically paired Doric columns.⁶⁰ Approached by stairs and surrounded by classically inspired buildings, and lacking a dramatic sculptural program, the total plan was much simpler, and therefore probably less appealing than the other proposals. The firm envisioned the Liberty Memorial to work in relation with downtown civic buildings just as the cathedral, baptistry, and tower in Florence relate to one another.⁶¹

Finally, eleventh place went to Selby H. Kurfiss of Kansas City. The central memorial structure of Kurfiss' design consisted of a huge cenotaph with a panel of sculptural relief facing north. To the south, an amphitheater extended out from the monumental block and to the north, opening to the Union Station, was a sculpted figural group. The figure at the apex of this group appeared to point to the cenotaph relief of marching soldiers, emphasizing the theme of the monument.⁶²

Site Dedication and Construction Preliminaries, 1921-1923

The site for the Liberty Memorial was dedicated on November 21, 1921. The dedication ceremony coincided with the third national convention of the American Legion. Both civic and national pride were displayed and celebrated by the crowd of 100,000 people amassed for the celebration. With a preamble of cannons, moving tributes by national and foreign dignitaries, and a pageant of Vestal Virgins

⁶⁰“Liberty Memorial Competition Pictures.”

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

carrying laurel wreaths, the Liberty Memorial, even before construction began, embodied the "Kansas City Spirit."⁶³ The site dedication of the Liberty Memorial was significant in that it was the only occasion following the war when all five Allied leaders were assembled together—a good measure of the worldly significance the Memorial had already assumed.

On November 3, 1921, Magonigle discussed his plans for the Memorial with the Board of Governors at a special meeting, and on the following day, the Board unanimously adopted the "general conception embodied" in Magonigle's competition sketches.⁶⁴ The Board also authorized a committee to consider ordering a complete survey of the Memorial site and contiguous territory.⁶⁵ R.A. Long appointed the committee and included himself. At the December 15 meeting of this committee with officers of the Liberty Memorial Association, Magonigle, Thomas Kimball, George E. Kessler, and H.M. Beardsley, R.A. Long initiated discussion on the relationship of Magonigle and Kessler to the Liberty Memorial Association. He hoped that a clear understanding of the parameters of this relationship would defer any future misunderstanding.⁶⁶ All present agreed that Magonigle would only be responsible for the architectural development of the Memorial, proper. Furthermore, Kessler and Magonigle confirmed that they were working in accord with one another in the architectural and landscape work.

George Kessler presented his plans for the grounds and street approaches that included a north auto entry and accounted for future development at the site to the Board of Governors on April 5, 1922. Magonigle, who had just returned to Kansas City from New York with new drawings, also presented his work at this meeting.⁶⁷ The architect's revised design, Scheme A, was even grander than his competition renderings. He had increased the diameter of the tower 5' and its height by 46".⁶⁸ Magonigle's amended plans were commended and approved by the Board.⁶⁹ At a special meeting of the Board of Governors on

⁶³ See Aber, "An Architectural History," 38-39, and *Kansas City Journal*, 1 November 1921.

⁶⁴ "Minutes," 290, 307.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, and Aber, "An Architectural History," 39-41.

⁶⁶ "Minutes," (Vol. 1, 15 December 1921).

⁶⁷ Kessler had previously submitted an early recommendation to the City Planning Commission on June 23, 1921. *Kansas City Star*, 23 June 1921.

⁶⁸ *Kansas City Star*, 5 April 1922.

⁶⁹ Aber, "An Architectural History," 43.

June 7, 1922, Hughes Bryant was named advisor to the architect.⁷⁰ Bryant would assist Magonigle in obtaining competitive bids, keeping records, and auditing and approving extras and credits.⁷¹

Returning to Kansas City in November 1922, Magonigle submitted a report dated October 17, 1922, and revised November 8, 1922, to the Board of Governors. His report revealed that the cost of Scheme A, with the larger shaft dimensions, could not be built for "a sum within measurable reach of the sum at our disposal."⁷² Therefore, Magonigle had designed Scheme B, using the dimensions of the original competition renderings. His new plans moved the shaft to the southwest along with other adjustments.⁷³ However, when Magonigle presented charts showing "basic estimates" with four scales of materials and costs, Scheme B was also not within the budgeted means, even based on the least costly estimate.

Magonigle's basic estimate was \$2,402,406, using golden-hued Kettle River sandstone from Minnesota. Alternate A used Benedict Stone in place of the sandstone, deducting \$144,541 from the Basic estimate to a total of \$2,257,865. Benedict Stone is a high quality, synthetic stone, rated superior in endurance to sandstone and equal in durability to the best limestone. Alternate B used limestone from Bedford, Indiana, throughout in place of sandstone, which added \$88,055 to the basic estimate for a total of \$2,490,461. Alternate C used Kettle River sandstone for the shaft, two buildings, and steps, and a special concrete finish for all terrace and retaining walls. This deducted \$277,576 from the basic estimate for a total of \$2,124,830. Alternate D was inclusive of Alternate C, along with the elimination of 458 feet of the lower retaining wall on the east and west. This would deduct \$331,397 from the basic estimate, making the total at \$2,071,009. All these estimates exceeded the Board's limit of \$1,600,000.⁷⁴

Faced with serious financial problems that could compromise the integrity of the project, the Board of Governors met on November 17, 1922, to consider "possible savings in the design or construction of the Memorial to bring estimated cost within the limit of the funds available." R.A. Long endeavored to

⁷⁰ Attorney Hughes Bryant had a "guiding hand in reshaping the skyline of Kansas City." He was directly responsible for the construction of several prominent commercial buildings including the Fidelity National Bank and Trust Company, the Bryant Building, and the R.A. Long Building.

⁷¹ "Minutes," 320.

⁷² Harold Van Buren Magonigle, Report to the President and the Board of Governors of the Liberty Memorial Association, 17 October 1922 and revised 8 November 1922, 3.

⁷³ "Minutes," 325-342.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 11 and graph.

remain positive and dedicated to the idealism that had initiated the Memorial program. Maginogle reported a number of reductions and money-saving proposals to the Board, including moving the axis of the shaft east and north, within a radius of twenty-five feet. The Board, however, was not satisfied and demanded that Magonigle seriously re-study his plans to accommodate the Board's new budget of \$1,600,000 for the Memorial. Magonigle unsuccessfully protested this figure.⁷⁵

At a meeting early in December 1922, Magonigle presented another revised plan with his estimate of \$1,572,322.⁷⁶ The architect's new plan reduced the overall dimensions by eliminating the original north-thrusting T-shape, keeping only the east-west crossbar. This eliminated additional expenses associated with the necessity for deeper footings and grading for work on the expansive north slope. The dimensions of the shaft remained the same. While some Board members expressed their concerns about the design and the finances involved, others found Magonigle's report satisfactory and the revised plans were approved.⁷⁷

George Kessler's death on March 19, 1923, was recorded in the minutes of the next meeting, held on the same day.⁷⁸ The minutes also reveal that Magonigle had gone against instructions to work with Kansas City contractors. Instead, he had sent plans and specifications to a contractor on the East Coast.⁷⁹ This action increased the friction between Magonigle and the Board, which had begun almost immediately with the architect's apparent disregard for the Association's finances. A month later, at a meeting on April 27, 1923, the Board of Governors approved the specifications for Maginogle's amended design, consisting of the shaft, two buildings to the east and west, the north wall, and a south Memorial court with steps

⁷⁵ "Minutes," 365-367, 377-386, 389-401. Magonigle also suggested that instead of bronze window panes with wire plate glass, wood panes and plain plate glass could be used; a gravel roof could replace copper; cement stair treads could replace terrazzo; all marble in the restrooms could be eliminated; the porticoes could be made of plaster instead of mosaics; and finally, the size could be reduced. See Aber, "An Architectural History," 46.

⁷⁶ Harold Van Buren Magonigle, "Report to the President and Board of Governors of the Liberty Memorial Association of Kansas City, Missouri," December 2, 1922.

⁷⁷ "Minutes," 419, 438-440, 449, 452-53, 474.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 491. Touching upon the death of Kessler at a meeting later in the year, the Board eulogized, "... we can but feel that this Association has lost a useful advisor, and our state and nation one of its most useful citizens... Mr. Kessler quickly felt the high purpose of the undertaking... [He] was endowed with the highest order of common sense... [which] always merited and obtained for him both... public and private confidence... In the art of park and boulevard construction and beautification he stood almost alone. As the impetus Pericles... gave to art... so the high ideals and beautiful works... of George E. Kessler, shall stand as beacons..." *Ibid.*, 734-35.

⁷⁹ In "Minutes," Magonigle mentioned New York engineers, Hool and Johnson, as well as other contractors for heating and ventilation, plumbing, and electrical work. See pages 5-6.

descending parallel to the buildings, so they could advertise for bids. The specifications were then released to contractors on May 7, with a return deadline of June 4.⁸⁰

On May 10, 1923, J.C. Nichols, representing the Liberty Memorial Association, presented the City Planning Commission with the final plans for the Liberty Memorial. The plans were approved by the Commission at this meeting.⁸¹ The following month, on June 11, the Liberty Memorial Association considered ten bids for construction. Westlake Construction Company, of St. Louis, Missouri, with the lowest bid of \$1,150,000 was awarded the contract.⁸²

At this stage, it appeared that the project was ready to break ground. But the Board had another problem with Magonigle on their hands—this time, regarding the architect's choice of his wife as the sculptor of the Memorial's bas-relief on the north wall. Meeting on June 13, 1923, to review Magonigle's choice, the Board requested Kimball's opinion. Kimball advised the Association to support Magonigle, for surely the architect would not jeopardize his reputation by enlisting the collaboration of an unqualified artist.⁸³ The next day, Magonigle reminded the Board that the Competition Program had authorized the architect to choose his collaborators. He then proceeded to confirm his prior nominations: Robert I. Aiken, past president of the National Sculpture Society and author of many distinguished works, as the sculptor of the four Guardian Spirits on the shaft; Mrs. Edith Magonigle, past president of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors of America, for the north wall sculpture relief; and himself, for the two sphinxes to be placed just south of the shaft. Elaborating on the wall relief, Magonigle stated that the design would depict the progress of civilization across an amazing 400', with a height of 13'. His estimated cost for the frieze was \$80,000, not including the production of a model, which would be around \$40,000 to \$50,000.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ "Minutes," 525.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 644, an excerpt of minutes of City Plan Commission meeting.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 617.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 679, 693, 718-720.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 723-724; and Aber writes, "Edith Magonigle worked on the drawings for the 400-foot 'March of Civilization' for some nine years. As completed, they are impressive and beautifully done. They were, however, never realized in stone. Nearly ten years passed before the Great North Wall was completed with an abbreviated sculptured frieze by another artist, a frieze that perhaps falls short of Mr. Kimball's plea that "sculpture must be a part and harmonize with architecture." Aber, "An Architectural History," 56.

Construction, 1923-1926

The approved design for the Liberty Memorial, as by the Board's vote of April 27, 1923, included four elements.⁸⁵ In these four elements, Magonigle combined the austerity of the ancient Egyptians, the simplicity of the ancient Greeks, and the spirituality of Gothic architecture. The chief element was the tall shaft, 36' in diameter at the base and 28' at the top, and rising 217'-06" high. Rather than a fluted, classical column, Magonigle's tower was faceted. Located near the top was Magonigle's "Altar of Sacrifice." Four sculpted Guardian Spirits encircled the shaft just below the altar. Each embodied a symbolic ideal for which the monument was erected. Distinguished by their attributes, Honor had a laurel wreath, Courage wore a helmet, Sacrifice had a winged star on her forehead, and Patriotism wore a civic crown.⁸⁶ Magonigle likened his guardian spirits to the sculptural program of the portal at Chartres Cathedral in France.⁸⁷ The wings of these figures appeared to support the bowl and censor from whom Magonigle's "Flame of Inspiration...a pillar of cloud by day, [and] a pillar of fire by night" enlivened the sky.⁸⁸ The shaft design included an elevator and staircase, allowing access to a lookout platform around the rim of the censor. The words, "In Honor of Those Who Served in the World War in Defense of Liberty," were to be etched on the south side of the shaft. Magonigle designed bronze doors for the shaft entrance and many other decorative elements.⁸⁹

In Magonigle's eyes, the next element of importance was the sculpted stone frieze on the north terrace wall. Exemplary of his many refinements, the north wall was designed using a concept known to the ancient Greeks as *entasis*. Further refinements by Magonigle included the backward inclination of all walls, one inch for every eight feet, giving the walls an air of greater stability and an effect of spring and life, as well as to bring them into harmony with the tapering of the shaft. Finally, from any point along the

⁸⁵ Harold Van Buren Magonigle, "Specifications: The Liberty Memorial, Kansas City, Missouri, " 24 February 1923.

⁸⁶ Close-up photographs of these guardian angels appeared in the January 1927 volume of *Architecture*. Liberty Memorial Archives.

⁸⁷ The Liberty Memorial Association and J.E. McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 25. The door jambs of the west portals at Chartres are lined with tall figures attached to columns.

⁸⁸ Four banks of floodlights were placed on both buildings to illuminate the shaft and steam was generated at the apex of the shaft, thereby creating the "pillar of cloud by day, [and] . . . fire by night." J.E. McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 27.

⁸⁹ Magonigle directed the modeling of the doors and various bronze elements by Angelo Tagliabue, working for John Donnelly, Inc., and also supervised the casting by John Polacheck.

east and west stairs, the shaft's outline is viewed in unison with the lines of the building corners.⁹⁰

Magonigle recognized that the tower would appear to sink in relation to the horizontal line of the north wall, and therefore softened this line by curving the wall upwards, so that the center was one foot higher than the ends.⁹¹

The other two elements of the Liberty Memorial plan were the two smaller buildings located to the east and west of the tall shaft. They created a long horizontal axis, intersected by the tower base. In plan, each building was 46' x 93'. The Legion Building, on the east, was to hold four bronze tablets on which were inscribed the names of the 440 sons and one daughter from Kansas City who had died in the war. The building also was to serve as a meeting room for the Liberty Memorial Association and other patriotic and veterans organizations. It was designed as a one-story structure with a partial basement for storage. The Museum Building to the west was envisioned to house a flag shrine, and was designed with a basement for storage. The heating plant, a steam-generated boiler for the "Flame of Inspiration," and electrical equipment were to be put in a sub-basement area.⁹² Guarding the south approach to the Memorial were two colossal sphinxes, 32' long and nearly 5' tall. The largest stones used in constructing the Memorial are to be found in the hindquarters of the sphinxes, weighing 17 tons apiece. "Future," on the east side facing west, where progress carried out its course, veiled its head to symbolize the uncertainty of the future, and "Memory," on the west side facing east, towards Europe, hid beneath its wings to represent the horrors and losses of the war.

The Liberty Memorial Association had a splendid Memorial design, created by a nationally respected architect, with public support and secure funding, so probably felt confident moving into the next phase of the project. But not long after excavation began on July 5, 1923, the progress of the Liberty Memorial met the first of many setbacks along the road to completion. In a report dated September 12, 1923, Hool and Johnson, the New York engineers selected by Magonigle, informed the architect of the soil

⁹⁰The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, *Historic and Dedicatory Monuments of Kansas City* (Kansas City: Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, 1987), 30-31.

⁹¹ The Liberty Memorial Association and J.E. McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 36. It was this wall on which Magonigle planned the long, sculptural frieze.

⁹² For more on the heating and ventilating system of the Memorial, see "Kansas City Liberty Memorial Heating and Ventilating Equipment," *The Heating and Ventilating Magazine* (February 1927): 61-71.

conditions at the Memorial site and recommended adjustments to the footing and structural plans.⁹³ The investigation revealed that rather than the expected "'hill of rock,' ... ancient glaciers... had left a complex condition ranging from honeycombed, or grottoed rock, to muddy clay as the nearest materials on which to rest the Memorial structure." However, the report also stated, "It is fortunate that a firm ledge underlies the entire site at Elevation 144 ... this 'Calico Ledge' can be depended upon ... to give unvarying and invariable support to the Memorial structure."⁹⁴ The engineers suggested using a five-foot cylinder plan to insure stability, to keep additional costs to a minimum, and to compensate for lost time.

Magonigle submitted this recommendation to the Board on November 1, 1923. Extra expenses for the new structural program amounted to nearly \$17,705. The combination of these expenses with costly delays made the Board uneasy. To many members, it was apparent that Magonigle had neglected to consider the actual site when projecting his estimates. The tension over finances between Magonigle and the Board further kindled the heated relationship, which would continue to be fueled by future disagreements and misunderstandings.

Under the watchful eye of the local press, work at the Memorial site resumed on January 18, 1924.⁹⁵ In April, the *Kansas City Star* wrote, "For months, nothing tangible ... [there were] months of soil tests, of excavating, of pouring massive concrete block fifty feet below the earth's surface ... [finally a] huge wall 488 feet long arises above the Station ... reaching a stage where a layman's eyes can measure its purpose."⁹⁶ Revered as the most exciting event ever to occur in the city, the Liberty Memorial construction gave Kansas Citians a sense of personal achievement.⁹⁷

The next setback in progress on the Memorial occurred July 2, 1924, just a year after the initial excavation had begun. Labor disputes threatened to disrupt the construction schedule. It took nearly a month to resolve the aggravation between Kansas City carpenter unions and the Westlake Construction

⁹³ Hool and Johnson, Engineers, "Report On Soil Conditions At The Liberty Memorial Site and Proposed Changes in Structural Footings To Meet These Conditions," 12 September 1923; and "Minutes," 736.

⁹⁴ Hool and Johnson, Engineers, to Mr. H. Van Buren Magonigle, 12 September 1923; and "Minutes," 737.

⁹⁵ See "Reshaping Memorial Hill in Preparation for Liberty Memorial Legion and Museum Buildings," *Kansas City Star*, 9 December 1923; *Kansas City Star*, 8 January 1924; and *Kansas City Times*, 9 January 1924.

⁹⁶ *Kansas City Star*, 20 April 1924.

⁹⁷ *Kansas City Journal Post*, 15 June 1924.

Company.⁹⁸ Work resumed on August 9, 1924. Concurrent with the summer labor strikes of 1924, the concern for the Memorial's immediate surroundings emerged, stemming from the unsightly land to the east side of Main Street. The area referred to as Sign Board Hill had been left rough from cutting the road in 1912, and posed a serious problem regarding the proper setting for Kansas City's monumental jewel.⁹⁹ In a newspaper interview, even the architect forewarned the people of Kansas City not to ignore the environment in which their monument was to sit.¹⁰⁰

Despite minor controversies as such, progress continued and newspaper reports reflected the continued civic interest and pride in the Liberty Memorial. The *Kansas City Journal Post* stated, "[It] will make [Kansas City] known all over the world ... [the] Heart of America will be famous for its perpetual beacon on a lofty column as ancient cities have been known in history for their beautiful monuments...a living memory to the thousands of travelers who pass through the Union Station."¹⁰¹ The pace of construction gained momentum and by October 24, 1924, a mere 15 feet of the shaft remained to be completed. During a simple, but impressive ceremony on November 9, 1924, the cornerstone was laid. A crowd of 25,000 people gathered for the event that had been planned on a more local and national key rather than the international flair of the 1921 site dedication.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ The exact accounts of the disputes are unclear as different sources record varying details. Correspondence is documented between R. A. Long, Liberty Memorial Association President, and Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor. Whether Gompers intervened or only cited regulations is unclear. General resentment persisted among those who challenged the outsider control of their monument, however, according to the project directors, the politics of the city necessitated outsiders. The Pendergast and Shannon factions had a "50-50" arrangement under which all city jobs and contracts went to one or the other organization. For instance, James Pendergast requested to Long that ex-servicemen be employed first. While this favor was fulfilled, job specialization required trained workers, rather than veterans, for much of the work. See McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 57.

⁹⁹ *Kansas City Star*, 2, 3, and 29 July 1924. A minority of Kansas Citians, however, felt otherwise, and spoke in defense of the hill. They resented "Just Another Bonus For The American Legion" and such "Municipal millinery!" *Kansas City Star*, 7 September 1924.

¹⁰⁰ *Kansas City Star*, 2 July 1924.

¹⁰¹ *Kansas City Journal Post*, 24 August 1924. Furthermore, the grand-scale of the construction fascinated the public, particularly the large amounts of stone required. The *Kansas City Star* of September 3, 1924, reported that 238 carloads held 4,000 tons of Indiana limestone, carefully selected by the architect himself.

¹⁰² The Liberty Memorial Association and J.E. McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 13.

As local newspapers continued to report the progress of the Memorial construction into the following year, another controversy arose.¹⁰³ The national president of War Mothers, the commander of the local post of disabled war veterans, and representatives from the Veterans of Foreign Wars approached the Board of the Liberty Memorial Association. Together, they contended that the name "Legion Building" was not a fair representation of all those who contributed to the war effort.¹⁰⁴ Their suggestions for a new name included "Veteran Building" and "Memorial Hall."¹⁰⁵ In response, the Board renamed the east building "Memory Hall" on February 24, 1925. However, the American Legion was not satisfied by this action, and would assert their disapproval by later declining the Liberty Memorial Association's invitation to officially participate in the 1926 dedication ceremonies. Considering the important role played by the American Legion in the first, 1921 site dedication, the loss of their support must have been disheartening. The Legion was not appeased until shortly after the 1926 dedication ceremony, in November, when the Board agreed to consider their grievances and make a change. While the name of the building was not to be altered, the American Legion preamble would be placed on the building and a dedication tablet would be installed near the Pershing Road Wall.¹⁰⁶

As the Board prepared to assess the final stages towards completing the Memorial, one big cloud of contention loomed overhead—money. The funds raised to finance the project were quickly depleting, and with the landscaping, the approaches and steps, the proposed sculptural frieze, the painted murals and maps inside Memory Hall, and other ornamental details yet to be completed, the Board was forced to reconsider their plans. Unfortunately, what was deemed priority by the Board did not coincide with Magonigle's ideas. At a Board meeting on May 8, 1925, J.C. Nichols reported that any additional work north of the wall should be left for later consideration, while the landscaping on the south should be finished immediately to accommodate for the proposed cultural institutions on that side.¹⁰⁷ He also

¹⁰³ "Memorial Hall To Be Completed By End of Week," *Kansas City Journal*, 18 February 1925; "The Pieces Go Together Like A Puzzle At Memorial's Crest," *Kansas City Star*, 30 June 1925; and *Kansas City Times*, 15 September 1925.

¹⁰⁴ A joint letter written by these three organizations, dated November 28, 1924, was sent to the Board. Their concerns were taken before the Board on December 1, 1924, and not until after the New Year did the Board respond. Aber, "An Architectural History," 67.

¹⁰⁵ "Minutes," 845.

¹⁰⁶ "Minutes," 1209-1210, 1228-1229.

¹⁰⁷ "Minutes," 858.

recommended re-examining Magonigle's plans for the lower walls and terraces and eliminating the circular driveway on the north side. The crucial question at hand was whether the steps and approaches or the frieze should be completed first. Magonigle was present at this meeting to argue his case for the frieze. He reminded the Board of the public criticisms that the Memorial, in its unfinished state, appeared like a fortress or a penitentiary, and thus did not yet fulfill its purpose as a tribute to peace.¹⁰⁸ Magonigle asserted that the shaft required the frieze to unify the entire architectural vision into harmony. He presented the Board with the frieze design drawn by his wife Edith, whom he had already named as the sculptor for the frieze. Titled "Progress of Civilization Toward Peace," Edith Magonigle's drawing incorporated over 500 figures from all historic times and artistic styles, marching towards a female figure symbolizing the Spirit of America.

On July 13, 1925, the Board finally made some decisions to complete the Memorial. They announced their adoption of a modified plan for the grounds. The north end of Main Street was to be sliced off and the north approach in front of the Memorial would be restricted to pedestrians. These changes, made "in the interest of economy," would eliminate "the additional stone walls and approaches" depicted in Magonigle's original plan.¹⁰⁹

As summer turned to fall, progress continued to complete the Memorial. In late August 1925, the last of the large derricks used to hoist the stones up the shaft was removed.¹¹⁰ In September, the two guardian sphinxes designed by Magonigle were mounted on the south side, under the supervision of John Donnelly, an architectural sculptor from New York.¹¹¹ On September 18, 1925, the bronze ring and steam mechanism for the "cloud by day and flame by night" was installed.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Criticism would continue throughout the Memorial project work. *Kansas City Star*, 4 November 1926 would report that the Memorial, as it stood unfinished, looked like "a silo" and "a salt-shaker."

¹⁰⁹ *Kansas City Star*, 14 July 1925; and *Kansas City Journal*, 15 July 1925.

¹¹⁰ *Kansas City Times*, 16 August 1925.

¹¹¹ *Kansas City Times*, 15 September 1925. Each sphinx consisted of 49 stones, with a total mass of 8,000 cubic feet and a weight of 615 tons. They were placed 125' apart.

¹¹² "A Fire Cloud Test October 8," *The Kansas City Star*, 18 September 1925. It was reported that the steam cloud would not be turned on permanently until the dedication scheduled for 1926.

In October 1925, Jules Guerin of New York was selected to design and execute the mural painting for Memory Hall.¹¹³ The Board approved his sketches on January 19, 1926, and on May 3, the artist completed the murals. Per Guerin's design, the mural along the east wall, facing the entrance, measured 17' x 36'. At the center of the composition was a figure representing peace and victory with a billowing American flag behind her. To the figure's right, a soldier places a wreath upon a grave while a French peasant and his daughter stand nearby. To the left of the figure, a sailor comforts a grieving mother. Behind these central figures is a war-riddled cathedral and marching soldiers.

In May 1926, the Kansas City Art Commission proposed a civic art center to be built south of the Memorial. The *Kansas City Journal Post* printed a diagram of the proposal, which included an art museum and a music hall. The plan required the razing of nearby buildings, including the Bruce Dodson Building and the Sweeney Building.¹¹⁴ No actions were taken to develop this art center, however, and the buildings deemed expendable remained. On June 23, 1926, the Board decided not to consider the north wall frieze, but to move forward in completing the landscaping. On October 22, the Board approved the hiring of the respected Kansas City landscape architectural firm, Hare and Hare, to prepare a plan for the land immediately surrounding the Memorial. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., of the Massachusetts firm, Olmsted Brothers, was asked to review the plan, which would then be submitted to the Board of Governors

¹¹³ Guerin was the artist of the Lincoln Memorial murals in Washington, D.C., and had been unofficially nominated by a local paper, along with Adolphe Blondheim of the Kansas City Art Institute, and L. D. (Daniel) MacMorris, a former Kansas Citian presently in New York. *Kansas City Post*, 17 October 1925. Later, in 1955, MacMorris would be the artist to restore Guerin's mural as well as paint additional ones. McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 74-75.

¹¹⁴ "Art Commission Proposes a Civic Art Center Treatment on a Scale of Grandeur," *Kansas City Journal Post*, 9 May 1926. See also *Kansas City Star*, 9 May 1926. Aber notes that "[a]t a special board meeting, 24 September 1928, elimination of the Sweeney Building was discussed. On 19 December 1928, the record of the meeting three months earlier was 'expunged' because of its 'confidentiality.' Many years later, the white classical Dodson Building was incorporated into the St. Mary's Hospital complex and sheathed in red brick. The Sweeney Automotive School Building, later named the Business Men's Assurance (BMA) Building, and later still, named the Pershing Building, also underwent restoration." Aber, "An Architectural History," 81, no. 93. On November 16, 1926, J.C. Nichols announced to the Board that the funds from the estate of Mrs. William Rockhill Nelson would not contribute to the construction of an art museum on the Memorial grounds and that plans were underway for an art museum funded by the Mary Atkins fund by the architects Wight and Wight. This concluded any further planning of a civic art center at this location. "Minutes," 1226.

and the Park Board for final approval.¹¹⁵ In spite of these efforts, landscaping plans were delayed for one year. Also in mid-October, the series of twenty-seven pictorial maps showing spheres of military action painted by D. Putnam Brinley were installed in Memory Hall.¹¹⁶

Further decoration of the Memorial included four large urns placed in front of the doors to the Museum Building and Memory Hall. As the only contrast to the buff, gray, and cream tones of the Indiana limestone, these four rose-colored marble urns were originally proposed to be black, representative of death and sacrifice. The insignia of the Army, the Navy, and the Red Cross, adorn three of the urns and on the fourth are symbols of industry. The bronze doors adorning the entrance to the shaft and the Museum Building were designed by Magonigle and executed in a special alloy with a warm black and silver color. The Museum doors were decorated with the Missouri State tree, the Hawthorn, symbols of peace and justice, and with images related to the war. Inscriptions taken from Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and Psalms, were placed above the doors.¹¹⁷ The bronze tablets with names of the 441 Kansas City war casualties decorated the west wall of Memory Hall. Blue mosaic tiles lined the open porticoes of the Museum Building and Memory Hall, and the window recesses on the north and south sides of the two buildings. In January 1926, twenty-eight Hawthorn trees were planted on the Memorial grounds and dedicated by the Kansas City Hoo-

¹¹⁵ Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957), "was destined to become a landscape architect and a leader in guiding the growth and philosophy of the profession established by his father. Together their careers spanned 100 years. He was a founding member and later president of the American Society of Landscape Architects; he established the first formal training in landscape architecture at Harvard University in 1900; and his prolific writings and extensive service on various boards and commissions made him a highly visible figure." See Shary Page Berg, "Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr." *American Landscape Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1989), 60.

¹¹⁶ For the historical and geographical accuracy in these maps, Brinley studied the resources at the Army War College in Washington, D.C. Prior to their installation in Kansas City, Brinley's murals were exhibited at the Grand Central Art Galleries in New York. Upon seeing them at this venue, Major General C.P. Summerhall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, expressed "high praise at the achievement both for the military accuracy and for artistic quality..." to the Liberty Memorial Association Board of Governors. Telegram from C.P. Summerhall to Board of Governors, 15 September 1926, quoted in McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 72. See also *New York Times*, 19 September 1926; J.E. McPherson, *Apollo* 6 (September 1927), 104; and J.E. McPherson, *Executive's Magazine* 11 (June 1927), 39.

¹¹⁷ A federal War Memorial Committee regulated inscriptions on war memorials. Their standards were reported in the *New York Times*, 5 August 1919.

Hoo Club, an organization of lumbermen.¹¹⁸ In February, four ornamental bronze lanterns were hung in pairs in the porticoes of the Museum Building and Memory Hall.¹¹⁹

With the exception of the north wall frieze, the buildings and monument were complete. And despite the unfinished Memorial grounds, the dedication ceremony for the Liberty Memorial was held on November 11, 1926. Keynote speaker President Calvin Coolidge addressed a crowd of nearly 150,000 people in a ceremony planned on a more local and national key rather than the international flair of the 1921 dedication.¹²⁰ Other speakers included Howard P. Savage, National Commander of the American Legion, Dwight F. Davis, U.S. Secretary of War, and Liberty Memorial Association President, R.A. Long. At this point in time, eight years past the end of the war, five years after the 1921 site dedication, and two years following the 1924 cornerstone ceremony, the emotional appeal of the Liberty Memorial and its symbolism held strong in the hearts and minds of all those present.¹²¹ Interesting to note is that amidst all the praise bestowed upon Kansas City's Liberty Memorial, no credit was given to the architect.¹²² Nonetheless, Magonigle had left his mark—by carving his name, as well as sculptor Robert Aitken's, next to the bronze doors of the shaft, about 7' above ground level.¹²³

¹¹⁸ *Kansas City Star*, 28 January 1926.

¹¹⁹ *Kansas City Star*, 23 February 1926. This article printed an illustration of one lantern. "They were hung inside the square pillars before the doors, and will light up the recesses of the high-ceilinged doorways."

¹²⁰ The Liberty Memorial Association and McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 13.

¹²¹ For press coverage, see *Kansas City Journal*, 7, 9, 11; 12 November 1926; *Kansas City Star*, 8, 11 November 1926; and *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 November 1926. See also *The Missouri Historical Review* 43 (January 1927): 259-60. Racial dissension regarding the lack of representation of all Kansas Citians in the day's celebration were voiced by C.A. Franklin, editor of the *Kansas City Call*. See *Kansas City Call*, 12 November 1926.

¹²² For criticism of this apparent lack of respect, see Henry H. Saylor, "The Editor Presents; The Liberty Memorial at Kansas City," *Architecture* 55 (January 1927): 31.

¹²³ Aber notes, "Apparently the propriety of the signatures in stone had been a matter of discussion. According to J.E. McPherson to R.A. Long, 12 July 1926, it was 'ethical and proper...[just] as an artist signs his pictures.' The authority on this subject was Kansas City architect, Henry F. Hoit. Unfortunately, cleaning for its rededication in 1961, significantly abraded the Liberty Memorial's stone surfaces including those bearing the artists' signatures and the carved names are somewhat difficult to see." Aber, "An Architectural History," 88, note 114.

Completion of the Liberty Memorial and Grounds, 1926-1938

Following the November 11, 1926 Dedication ceremony, the Board struggled to complete the Memorial and beautify the grounds. Two integral elements remained unfinished—the sculptural frieze on the north wall and the landscape beautification. Likewise, two important factors contributed to the difficulty; namely, money and strained relations between the architect and the Board.

On November 26, 1926, R.A. Long retired from his position as President of the Liberty Memorial Association after eight years of dedicated service. The Board elected George S. Carkener to replace Long.¹²⁴ Also on this date, the Board officially rejected Edith Magonigle as sculptor for the frieze, a motion pending for the past several years after her nomination.¹²⁵ The decision, in all probability, was not related to Mrs. Magonigle's competence nor her design, but rather a reflection upon the strained relations between her husband and the Board.¹²⁶ From the beginning, the architect appeared to disregard finances as well as overestimate his influence, or at least this was how the Board perceived his actions. That he continued to insist on his wife as the sculptor for the frieze had pushed the Board to their limits of toleration. Despite measures taken in December 1926, and during the following years, to terminate Magonigle's contract, the Board could not easily remove the thorn in their side. Not only was the contract legally binding, but the architect's pride and reputation drove him to stay on until the project was completed.¹²⁷ The Board had no choice other than to simply ignore the issue of the frieze, which remained incomplete until Magonigle's death. Meeting on February 10, 1927, the Board, in general terms, agreed to

¹²⁴ George Carkener, of the firm Goffe, Lucas and Carkener, was involved in the grain commission business.

¹²⁵ In the original newspaper announcement of Magonigle's selection by the jury, the architect named his collaborators, which included his wife Edith as the sculptor. *Kansas City Times*, 29 June 1921. Interesting to also note is that on August 24, 1924, a newspaper article reported the two buildings would be "decorated with mural paintings to be the work of Mrs. Magonigle..." *Kansas City Journal-Post*, 24 August 1924.

¹²⁶ In fact, many national voices spoke out in support of Edith during this time. See "East and West Meet in Peace Memorial," *New York Times Magazine*, 22 August 1926, 18-19; J. Monroe Hewlett, "A World War Memorial," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 14 (September 1926): 388-95; Arthur T. North, "The Passing Show: The Acropolis at Kansas City," *Western Architect* 35 (October 1926): 132-133; "Kansas City Memorializes," *Literary Digest*, 11 September 1926, 24-25; and Irving K. Pond, "An Essay in Collaboration," *American Architect*, 5 October, 1926, 285-87. See also Edith Magonigle, "East is East—and West is West," *World Review*, 25 October 1926, 81-82, 97.

¹²⁷ *Kansas City Star*, 22 December 1926, printed in full the correspondence between the Board and Magonigle regarding the Board's rejection of Edith. See also "Memorandum as to the Developments of the Liberty Memorial," undated manuscript in the Liberty Memorial Archives.

proceed in completing the Memorial with plans approved by the Park Board and with the services of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.¹²⁸

Olmsted outlined his plans for the Memorial grounds in a lengthy letter to J.C. Nichols dated April 6, 1927. Olmsted's vision for the entire area was both philosophical and technical. He wrote:

The plan should be of such character: first that if executed the total finished result should impress all who pass through the area with a high degree of inspiration, enjoyment and satisfaction, and with the least possible accompaniment of regrets or disappointment concerning anything they see while in the area; and second, that a confident hope can reasonably be entertained of successfully executing the plan within a reasonable length of time and within a not unreasonable cost in case the leaders of public opinion in the city really want to see it carried out and are willing to work for it.¹²⁹

Included in this letter was a summary of the design for both the general plan for the north lawn and also a plea for additional funding to complete the design.

A central space of considerable width laying in general along the axis of the Memorial and along the direct or diagonal line of sight between the front of [Union] Station and the Memorial, a space that will include at one end a suitable plaza in front of the Station and at the other end the lower terrace of the Memorial on which Mr. Magonigle is now working, must be treated as one major unit, so as to maintain satisfactorily what Major L'Enfant called a "reciprocity of sight" between the terminal objects. This space must be free from seriously obstructive interior masses of any kind, and have a generally concave shape in longitudinal section so as to culminate agreeably in the Memorial.¹³⁰

With regard to the south lawn, Olmsted cited a letter he had written to Magonigle, in which he said:

I feel very strongly . . . that the general expression and quality of the whole composition is going to depend very largely upon what line or plans the beholder feels to be the boundary between the central, high-level unit, which relates directly to the Memorial and terminates in it, and the hillside unit which takes up the difference in level between that central unit and the boundary streets and which will form a unifying frame or base for the Memorial and its southerly approach taken together. One [boundary] is like the edge of the Acropolis, where the surrounding unit plunges away from a parapet line that marks the edge of a plateau... the other is a more massive enclosure rising well above the central hilltop unit and visually restricting it.¹³¹

¹²⁸ R.A. Long offered on this date to collaborate with others in contributing one twelfth of the expense for the Memorial frieze, should extra funds be required.

¹²⁹ Letter to J.C. Nichols, Kansas City, Missouri, from the office of the Olmsted Brothers, Palos Verdes Estates, California, 6 April 1927, 1.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³¹ Abstracts from a letter to Mr. Magonigle dated March 21, 1927 as attached to the letter cited in footnote 120, 1.

In the end, Olmsted felt that the best solution to the problem of the south lawn was to frame in the sides of the plateau unit along the outer edges with a mass of forest trees, obscuring the commercial buildings and avoiding needless and expensive soil removal.¹³² He would take on the project only if Hare and Hare was named as associate landscape architects, that Magonigle act as consulting architect, that his firm act as consulting landscape architect to Magonigle, that all expenses be authorized by himself and finally, that the preparation of working drawings and specifications were under the direction of his firm.¹³³

Olmsted worked on the landscaping plans in collaboration with Magonigle during the first months of 1927.¹³⁴ As Olmsted requested, the prominent Kansas City firm of Hare and Hare was hired by the city Park Board in November 1928 to carry out the landscaping work.¹³⁵ However, landscaping progress, as well as the completion of the Memorial, proper, moved slowly. The stock market crash of 1929 posed the next roadblock to completing the Memorial. The ensuing depression hit Kansas City no differently than the rest of the nation. The Board's strategy for completing the Memorial necessitated economy-based simplification and reduction, which drastically altered Magonigle's original conception.¹³⁶ The area most affected was the eight-and-one-half acres that comprised Station Park. This land was under the jurisdiction of the Park Board and therefore, the city was financially responsible for the work at that site.¹³⁷ However, the Depression had left the Park Board with inadequate funds to grade the grounds surrounding the Memorial, forcing the Board to request a favor from Kansas City Democratic political boss, Tom J. Pendergast.¹³⁸ His influence helped secure bond money from the Ten-Year Plan, a \$40 million public works project, for the completion of the Liberty Memorial.¹³⁹ On January 22, 1931, the Park Board

¹³² *Ibid.*, 2.

¹³³ Letter to J.C. Nichols from Olmsted, 6 April 1927, 2.

¹³⁴ Harold Van Buren Magonigle to Liberty Memorial Association President George S. Carkener, 11 March 1927.

¹³⁵ The problem of traffic movement was tackled along with the landscape beautification work in July 1930. *Kansas City Star*, 13 July 1930.

¹³⁶ Aber, "An Architectural History," 104.

¹³⁷ The Liberty Memorial Association and McPherson, *Liberty Memorial*, 20.

¹³⁸ *Kansas City Times*, 23 January 1931. Machine Boss Tom Pendergast, saloonkeeper, deputy constable, City Councilman, and owner of the "ubiquitous Ready-Mix-Concrete Company," was indicted by the Federal Grand Jury for back taxes in 1939.

¹³⁹ In 1931, The Ten-Year Plan was a \$40 million public works project for Kansas City, including a new City Hall, the Municipal Auditorium, parks, playgrounds, and boulevards.

approved plans for the Memorial's north approaches and in April 1931, Kansas City citizens passed a bond issue designed to help finance both the Memorial and the Nelson Gallery of Art.¹⁴⁰

Work on the major landscaping program moved forward on June 21, 1932. Olmsted, assisted by his New York associate, Percival Gallagher, oversaw the completion of the landscape planning, while the Board selected S. Herbert Hare, landscape consultant to the Board, William D. Wight, the consulting architect, David E. Long, Park Board President, W.H. Dunn, Superintendent of Parks, and J.V. Lewis, field engineer, to complete the north approach. Olmsted's plans included placing a series of "benches, utilizing natural rock ledges as bases" along the Main Street wall.¹⁴¹ Plans for the north included a plaza with a 90' x 10' Dedication Wall, placed 150' from the street separating the Memorial grounds and the Union Station. E.M. Prellwitz of Olmsted Brothers, was responsible for the design. During the years leading up to November 1935, five bronze portrait medallions of the Allied leaders would be added to this wall.¹⁴² From the wall, steps would lead up to the Memorial over a series of terraces in the lawn. Maple trees were to be planted to add shade and color.¹⁴³ The plans also included the construction of fountains near the steps, just below the north wall.¹⁴⁴

Work on the north side of the Liberty Memorial began on April 11, 1933. Wight had estimated the cost of his plans at \$200,000, not including the architect's fees. The Board requested that modifications

¹⁴⁰ *Kansas City Times*, 29 May 1931, and McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 90.

¹⁴¹ *Kansas City Times*, 1 July 1932. A photograph of the "[b]eautifying the Main Street side of Liberty Memorial Hill" appeared in *Kansas City Times*, 20 August 1932, showing the "jagged mass of rocks ... being graded into a series of benches supported by natural rock ledges." Olmsted sent a plaster model of the park-like setting he designed for the north approach to the Board. In its present condition, the hill was bleak with an awkward slope. *Kansas City Star*, 9 November 1932.

¹⁴² "Minutes," 1393. The *Kansas City Times*, 24 March 1933, reported that Wight and Olmsted had originally opposed the portraits because they felt the Memorial should remain one to all soldiers, not just the military leaders. Walker Hancock of Gloucester, Massachusetts, created the medallions. Two large bronze buffaloes were also proposed, but never implemented. Records in the Liberty Memorial Archives indicate that William D. Wight did come to appreciate Hancock's work. Noted in Aber, "An Architectural History, 108.

¹⁴³ *Kansas City Times*, 24 March 1932.

¹⁴⁴ For a detailed description of these fountains, see Sherry Piland and Ellen J. Uguccioni, *Fountains of Kansas City* (Kansas City: City of Fountains Foundation, 1985): 132-134 and plate 6.

be made to lower this amount and further authorized Wight to consult with sculptors in New York.¹⁴⁵ On November 29 of the previous year, W. D. Wight presented the Board sketches that included the proposed frieze on the north wall. Wight also reported four estimates submitted by four sculptors, whom he had met with in New York, to the Board on April 18, 1933. They included: Leo Friedlander, \$37,000; Charles Keck, \$52,000; Albert T. Stewart, \$34,000; and Edmond Amateis, \$23,000. With the lowest bid and the most recommendations in his favor, Amateis was selected by the Board to execute the frieze sculpture.¹⁴⁶

Wight had significantly modified Magonigle's original plan for the frieze. He changed the dimensions from 13' x 400' to 19' x 145'. Furthermore, he moved the frieze to a lower position on the wall, which required the replacement of the six-inch limestone with stone 10' thick.¹⁴⁷ Rather than a continuous procession of many figures, Wight's general composition had a central figure.¹⁴⁸ The Board approved Wight and Wight's completed plans for the north terrace walls, platforms, approaches, fountains, frieze, and steps, and Amateis' initial drawing for the frieze on June 8 and 19, 1933, respectively.¹⁴⁹ Amateis composed his drawing around a theme that contrasted war and peace; the "Curse of War" was depicted on the east side and the "Blessings of Peace" on the west. He continued Magonigle's symbolic use of imagery, including the east-west orientation of the sphinxes and the wings of the Guardian Angels. His plan was to further make the contrast between war and peace through artistic measures. Rigid, straight lines to suggest the uncivilized nature of conflict would delineate the eastern side representing war. The western side, representing peace, would be carved with bold and deep lines to emphasize strength and unity.¹⁵⁰ During the next two months, various recommendations and modifications were made to the

¹⁴⁵ "Minutes," 1359. Wight's modified plans, reduced in cost to \$180,000 were approved and implemented by the Board on March 29, 1933. "Minutes," 1362. The plans for the Memorial completion were illustrated in *The Kansas City Star*, 4 December 1932.

¹⁴⁶ See *Kansas City Star*, 9 May 1933. Edmund Romulus Amateis worked in the tradition of sculptor Paulanship. See Jacques Schnier, *Sculpture in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948).

¹⁴⁷ Magonigle had placed his design at a higher position with a panel of eight inch stone. Aber, "An Architectural History," 112, and *Kansas City Star*, 9 May 1933.

¹⁴⁸ "The Proposed Plan For Completing the North," *Kansas City Times*, 24 March 1933.

¹⁴⁹ Amateis' drawing was praised by W.D. Wight as well as Paul D. Gardner, Director of the Nelson Gallery of Art and Wallace Rosenbauer, of the Kansas City Art Institute faculty. Aber, "An Architectural History," 113.

¹⁵⁰ See McShane, "Liberty Memorial," 77-78, for a detailed description of Amateis' frieze.

design and on August 10, 1933, Amateis' plan was approved.¹⁵¹ Work on the frieze began in January of the following year.¹⁵² In July 1933, Wight and Wight made plans for the lighting of the Memorial terraces, frieze wall, and fountains.¹⁵³ In December, workers paid by the Civil Works Administration (CWA) began grading and making fills for Kessler Road, to the west of the Memorial.¹⁵⁴ The CWA continued to pay laborers through February 1934, working under the direction of W.H. Dunn and J.V. Lewis, carrying out the plans designed by Olmsted.

In June 1933, the Olmsted office sent the Board of Park Commissioners a general planting plan for the Liberty Memorial Grounds and an accompanying plant list, as well as suggestions for soil preparation. An attached letter to the Board outlined the landscaping scheme for the south and north side of the Memorial. The plan for the south portion "embodies Mr. Olmsted's conception of treating the summit of the hill south of the monument as a more or less compact wood with the south axial approach to the Memorial apparently cut through it. To simulate a natural woodland we have used an assortment of trees, with oaks predominating."¹⁵⁵ The letter also suggested that the plantings for the north lawn occupy the outer edges of the area and more or less covering the slopes between the principal paths and bounding streets...with the strongest massing of trees including poplars, along Kessler Drive to screen the buildings to the west and northwest."¹⁵⁶ With the exception of tree plantings, it appears that the majority of Olmsted's planting schemes, as called for in his extensive landscaping plan, were never implemented.

¹⁵¹ Changes suggested by war organizations included "the elimination of the money changers, the ravished women, and the jackal," which were replaced by soldiers and an eagle. "Minutes," 1372. A request was also made that the weapon of the war—the machine gun—should also be included on the frieze, however this suggestion was not incorporated into the finished composition.

¹⁵² *Kansas City Times*, 10 and 16 January 1934, reported on the Italian artisans who "pointed" their way across the north wall, under the protection from winter weather by a rolling shed. See Aber, 115, for her critical comparison between the Amateis' frieze and the original frieze design by Magonigle.

¹⁵³ Wight and Wight to Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, 21 and 27 July 1933. On the buttresses of the great steps White and White located a series of flush light receptacles with louvers, close to the line of the treads. The frieze itself was to be lit by flood-lights installed behind the hedge.

¹⁵⁴ During the month of December, approximately \$85,485 was paid to 6,700 previously unemployed men. *Kansas City Star*, 16 December 1933. As the work continued into 1934, newspapers reported on the federal aid that helped to complete the Liberty Memorial. *Kansas City Times*, 31 January 1934; *Kansas City Star*, 9 February 1934; and *Kansas City Times*, 18 May 1935.

¹⁵⁵ Letter to the Board of Park Commissioners, Kansas City, Missouri from the office of the Olmsted Brothers dated 15 June 1933, 1.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

At a meeting of the Board on March 15, 1934, two pressing issues were addressed. The Board's final settlement with Magonigle was discussed first.¹⁵⁷ The second order of business was the preparation of a memorial service for R.A. Long, who had died on that day. The service was held May 13, 1934, in Memory Hall. More than 250 people braved the rain and unfinished walkways up to the Memorial to pay tribute to R.A. Long, "builder, philanthropist, and inspirer of the Liberty Memorial."¹⁵⁸ At the end of the summer, Harold Van Buren Magonigle, the architect of the Memorial, also died.¹⁵⁹

With the passing of these two important men in the creation and development of the Liberty Memorial, came the dedication of the north wall frieze—the element that had plagued them both for nearly fifteen years. The ceremony was held on Armistice Day eve, November 10, 1935. For Kansas City citizens and the Liberty Memorial Association, the completion of the frieze designated the completion of the Memorial. However, the celebration demonstrated none of the jubilation and fanfare of the prior dedications. With the country just coming out of a devastating economic depression and the world on the verge of another war, only the hope for peace carried the ceremony. General Malin Craig, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, delivered the dedicatory address on the north terrace, in front of the Memorial. The climax of the ceremony occurred after the sun had set, when the floodlights on the Memorial buildings flashed on, lighting up a completed Liberty Memorial.¹⁶⁰ The following day, during the Armistice Day parade, the Wall of Dedication was presented to the public. Marchers then made their way up to the shaft for the traditional Armistice Day services.¹⁶¹ On November 19, 1935, the Board of Trustees of the Liberty Memorial Association met for their fifteenth annual meeting. It was customary at this annual meeting to pay tribute to Association members who had died during the past year, and as if to bring the Memorial project full circle, the Board presented their last honor in memory of Harold Van Buren Magonigle, the

¹⁵⁷ "Minutes," 1410. In early March 1935, Amateis traveled to Kansas City to see the completed frieze he had designed and ordered the lines to be reworked. His decision was to compensate for the lack of sunlight that fell on the north wall, and thereby to create more contrast of light and dark by higher relief. *Kansas City Star*, 8 March 1935.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted from Aber, "An Architectural History," 116. *Kansas City Times*, 14 May 1934.

¹⁵⁹ Magonigle's death on August 29, 1935, was noted in *Pencil Points* 16 (September 1935): 485. A tribute to the architect appeared in the October issue. Francis P. Sullivan, "A Conscientious Artist," *Pencil Points* 16 (October 1935): 521-522.

¹⁶⁰ *Kansas City Times*, 6 and 8 November 1935.

¹⁶¹ *Kansas City Times*, 8 November 1935.

architect whose meaningful and original conception gave an imposing monument to Kansas City and the nation.¹⁶²

Post-1935

Although both the north frieze and the Wall of Dedication were dedicated in 1935, there were several major landscaping elements of Liberty Memorial that were implemented in the years to follow. In the spring of 1937, WPA workers began planting more than 1,000 native Hawthorn trees on the mall. Work proceeded through March with the planting of 300 sugar maple trees. Additionally, Chinese elms and sycamores were planted on the east and west portions and the north lawn of Liberty Memorial. Finally, in 1938, Liberty Memorial took on its final form when the temporary lights were replaced by lighting standards used on the boulevards. Wires, which previously hung from wooden poles, were placed underground.

It appears that between the completion of the Liberty Memorial in 1938 and 1941, no significant changes occurred. In 1942, the Heart of America Navy Mothers Club initiated the first of several subsequent tree and plaque dedications, in honor of those who lost their lives in service, along the South Mall. In 1948 the 89th Division Memorial was dedicated at the south entrance. During the 1950s and in 1970, several additional murals by Kansas City artist Daniel MacMorris were hung in Memory Hall. Accounts of these events and art works are addressed in the physical description section found at the beginning of this document. Further activities are listed in the chronology that follows the historical narrative. Since its completion in 1938, Liberty Memorial has served Kansas City and the nation as a memorial site and as a World War I museum and archives.

Conclusions and Comments Regarding the Liberty Memorial Museum

Originally intended to be a lasting monument to commemorate the sacrifices of those who fought and died in World War I, Liberty Memorial today stands as a reminder of those who have served our country in battle since the Great War of 1914-1918. United by means of a grand axial design terminating

¹⁶² "Minutes," 1439-1440.

in the monumental trio of buildings and enormous shaft, Liberty Memorial is *the* sacred civic shrine in Kansas City. The fulfillment of the plan, which embedded a profound and lasting dignity to Memorial Hill, demonstrated the prowess of city leaders and the public alike. A summary of the importance of Liberty Memorial is best expressed by George Ehrlich, architectural historian and professor emeritus of the University of Missouri-Kansas City:

Characteristic of this vision was the drive to fund a gigantic monument to the dead of World War I. While symbolically a clear link to the past, Liberty Memorial was also evidence of progress appropriate to the new image of the city. The public became thoroughly involved in the discussion over what would be a suitable memorial, and it was not surprising that a grand monument, such as could be found in major cities, rather than a utilitarian memorial, was chosen. The selection of the site on the crest of the hill south of the Union Station was also in keeping with the spirit if not the scope of earlier plans for a civic center at that location. Fund raising involved all segments of the population, and the design was selected through a national competition. The original expectations held for both the memorial and the site were not fully realized, and what eventuated required some years' time. But when the design of H. Van Buren Magonigle was dedicated in 1926, there was no doubt that here was a fitting companion to Jarvis Hunt's Union Station. Both were suitable civic images for the city building. Both are also structures in the best tradition of early twentieth century, Beaux-Arts monumentalism.¹⁶³

With one exception, it appears that the Liberty Memorial is the most elaborate and complex World War I memorial in the nation. War tributes are typically single pieces of sculpture with examples of the ubiquitous Dough Boy throughout the nation.¹⁶⁴ Other monuments dedicated to World War I include the Doric column and plaza designed by Paul P. Cret (the second place winner in the Liberty Memorial competition) and sculpted by Carl P. Jennewein. Reflecting the late 1920s popularity of Greek Revivalism, Cret's monument is located in Providence, Rhode Island and was completed in 1929.¹⁶⁵ The Rosedale World War I Memorial Arch, designed by John L. Marshall and constructed in 1923-1924, is a scaled-down version of the Arc de Triomphe. Listed in the National Register in 1977, the Rosedale Arch is sited in Rosedale, Kansas.

¹⁶³ George Ehrlich, *Kansas City, Missouri: An Architectural History, 1826-1976* (Kansas City: Historic Kansas City Foundation), 82.

¹⁶⁴ Examples of World War I sculpture include: World War I and Confederate Soldier Monument, Memphis, Texas (1924); World War I relief, Union City, New Jersey (n.d.); "Hooded Woman," Albany, New York (1923). There is also a World War I memorial statue located in Phoenix at the Phoenix Indian School.

¹⁶⁵ The World War I monument in Providence is a contributing resource in the Downtown Providence Historic District. See also HABS No. RI-387.

Perhaps the only World War I monument that is as distinguished in scope and design as the Liberty Memorial is the 1920's Indiana World War Memorial Plaza Historic District. Like Liberty Memorial, the Indiana site, located on a north-south vista, combines monumental architecture with heroic statuary. Of exceptional architectural and planning significance, this National Historic Landmark district is also the location of the national headquarters of the American Legion and its auxiliary and affiliated organizations.¹⁶⁶

With regard to the creation of a museum at the Liberty Memorial, it is important to note that the Liberty Memorial Association resolved to establish a future "war museum" at a meeting of the Sixth Joint meeting of the Committee of One Hundred Fifty held on February 13, 1919.¹⁶⁷ Over the course of six years, prior to the completion of the memorial, several important artifacts were donated to the Liberty Memorial Association, including: uniforms, posters, ancient relics from France, an ordnance exhibit, trophies, guns, captured German materials, and U.S. War Department medals. Subsequently, donations of important World War I artifacts continued. Correspondence between members of the LMA clearly indicates that it was always the intent to create a museum at the Liberty Memorial and that, in 1926, the Trophies Committee was given the duty of "establishing the War Museum, for the use of which the west hall of the Liberty memorial was designated."¹⁶⁸

Harold Van Buren Magonigle, architect and man of "brilliant and varied talent"

Harold Van Buren Magonigle was born in 1867 in Bergen Heights, Ohio, where he attended public school.¹⁶⁹ He went on to earn his professional training in an unconventional manner, not uncommon

¹⁶⁶ "The Indiana World War Memorial Plaza Historic District," National Historic Landmark Nomination, U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Midwest Region, 19.

¹⁶⁷ "Minutes," 72.

¹⁶⁸ "Minutes," 1222. The minutes from this meeting also state "now that the existence and nature of the Museum have become known, we are receiving many offers of contributions; and if it continues to grow, as we hope it will, it will be necessary in the not [too] distant future to supply more cases, for which there is ample floor space in the hall."

¹⁶⁹ His parents were John Henry and Katherine Celestine (Devlin) Magonigle. "Magonigle, H(arold) Van Buren," *Who Was Who in American History--Arts and Letters*, (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1975): 309, and "Magonigle, H(arold) Van Buren," *Who Was Who in America 1897-1942*, 8th edition, volume 1 (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1981): 767-68.

for the time.¹⁷⁰ Rather than studying at the leading American universities, he worked in some of the most prestigious architectural firms in the country, including Vaux and Radford, Charles C. Haight, McKim, Mead, and White, and Rotch and Tilden and thus, secured the equivalent architectural training. In 1889, Magonigle won the Gold Medal of the Architectural League of New York. He moved to Boston in the summer of 1891 to join the staff of Rotch and Tilden, hoping to position himself as a candidate for the Rotch Traveling Scholarship.¹⁷¹ From 1893-1894, he also taught courses in decorative design at Cowles Art School in Boston. His efforts paid off as he earned the Traveling Scholarship in the spring of 1894, which allowed him to study in Europe. From 1894 to 1896, Magonigle traveled to Italy, Greece, France, and England, where he competently drew some of the greatest architectural monuments of the world and studied at the American Academy in Rome.¹⁷² Upon returning to the United States during the fall of 1896, he spent the winter in the office of McKim, Mead, and White and in 1897, Magonigle became a practicing architect in New York.¹⁷³

Magonigle married Edith Marion Day, also an accomplished artist, on April 24, 1900.¹⁷⁴ Early in his professional career, Magonigle associated with the architect Evarts Tracy in Tracy and Magonigle for

¹⁷⁰ Aber, "An Architectural History," 26. The *Kansas City Times*, 29 June 1921, described him as a "self-made man."

¹⁷¹ Harold Van Buren Magonigle, "A Half Century of Architecture, 5, A Biographical Review," *Pencil Points* 15 (July 1934): 357. Benjamin Rotch, father of Arthur Rotch, a partner in the Boston architectural firm Rotch and Tilden, founded the scholarship in 1884. The scholarship gave the recipient a generous two-years of travel and study abroad. Magonigle reminisces about his time in Boston in this article.

¹⁷² Many of these drawings are published in Francis S. Swales, "Master Draughtsmen, X, Harold Van Buren Magonigle," *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925): 46-66; and Harold Van Buren Magonigle, "A Half Century of Architecture, 6, A Biographical Review," *Pencil Points* 15 (September 1934): 464.

¹⁷³ Magonigle, *Pencil Points* 15 (July 1934), 357; and Swales, *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925), 47.

¹⁷⁴ Edith was born in Brooklyn, New York, on May 11, 1877, to John and Clara Marion Perry (Stafford) Day. She attended private schools and was a painter and sculptor. Her principle works include the frieze for the Administration Building, Branch Brook Park, Newark, New Jersey, murals in the Playhouse, Wilmington, Delaware, work for the residence of Isaac Guggenheim, Port Washington, and various works of architectural sculpture, of which, "Asia," Victory Way, Park Avenue, New York, is one. She was a member of Women's Roosevelt Memorial Association and served as the organization's president from 1920-1922. She was also a member of the National Society of Mural Painters. "Magonigle, Edith Marion," *Who Was Who in American History—Arts and Letters* (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1975): 309.

two years, and then spent another two years as head of the office of Schickel and Ditmars.¹⁷⁵ After these associations, Magonigle practiced alone, with the exception of his work with H.W. Wilkinson. His important works include: the McKinley Monument at Canton, Ohio; the Maine Monument and the Fireman's Memorial in New York; Gate's Avenue Court House in Brooklyn; the Liberty Memorial at Kansas City, Missouri; the U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Tokyo; the Arsenal Technical Schools in Indianapolis, Indiana; the Schenley Fountain in Pittsburg; and his design for the Robert Fulton Memorial Watergate in New York.¹⁷⁶ He was also the architect for many private residences, clubs, schools, and other buildings.¹⁷⁷ In 1931, he received a doctoral degree, presumably honorary, from the College of Architecture at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.¹⁷⁸

Concurrent to his architectural practice, he served as First Lieutenant and Battle Adjunct General in the New York National Guard and was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), a member and president of the New York chapter of the AIA, and a member and director of the American Federation of Arts. He had also served as the Vice President of the National Sculpture Society from 1925-1927.¹⁷⁹ During 1930-1931, the New York chapter of the AIA awarded Magonigle their Gold Medal of Honor.¹⁸⁰

Magonigle's talents were many. He was especially gifted as a draftsman.¹⁸¹ Architecture was not, however, his only artistic interest. He also pursued other design endeavors, as well as literary ones. When not creating beautiful and precisely rendered architectural drawings, he designed furniture, magazine covers, seals, pottery, typography, and illustrations, and sketched in watercolor and painted in oil.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁵ His association with Tracy suffered financially due to the national economic turmoil of Cleveland's second term. Magonigle, *Pencil Points* 15 (September 1934), 465. Magonigle describes his time at Schickel and Ditmars, and with an interesting humor, he also recalls Schickel's German accent in his article "A Half Century of Architecture, 7, A Biographical Review," *Pencil Points* 16 (November 1934): 564-565.

¹⁷⁶ The Fulton Memorial, however, was never built because of financial problems. Aber, "An Architectural History," 27.

¹⁷⁷ "Magonigle, H," *Who Was Who in American History—Arts and Letters*, 309; and "Magonigle, H," *Who Was Who in America*, 768.

¹⁷⁸ Both "Magonigle, H," *Who Was Who in American History—Arts and Letters*, 309; and "Magonigle, H," *Who Was Who in America*, 768, are unclear as to whether this was an honorary award, but presumably so, since Magonigle had been practicing professionally since 1897 and died in 1935.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ "The paragon of line drawing of architectural detail became Magonigle's drawings." *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁸² Swales, *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925), 66.

Complementing, and even matching his design work, was Magonigle's literary talent. An eloquent speaker, he published many papers and articles in professional journals, including *Brickbuilder* and *Pencil Points*. For the latter, Magonigle was a regular contributor of architectural criticism under the title, "The Upper Ground, Being Essays in Criticism." He authored three books: *The Nature, Practice and History of Art* (1924, Charles Scribner's Sons); *Architectural Rendering in Wash* (1926, Charles Scribner's Sons); and *The Renaissance*.¹⁸³ In both his artistic and literary work, Magonigle stressed academic training and rendering while allowing for free expression—two methods often difficult to orchestrate into a balanced union.¹⁸⁴ At the 1924 Convention of the AIA in Washington D.C., he presented his theory on what American architects should strive for: "An architecture firmly rooted in tradition, appropriate to its uses and therefore of infinite variety, free from freakishness as it is free from pedantry."¹⁸⁵

Magonigle's critical reception, despite the negative image he has been given in the Liberty Memorial history, was very positive. Writing in 1925, just after construction on the Memorial in Kansas City began, Francis S. Swales commended Magonigle by stating, "[a]s a designer of important monuments he has achieved a leading position among modern architects . . . [Magonigle's works are] distinctly American. They are a kind of architecture that will survive and find a place in architectural history, and are, therefore, worthy of the excellent representation which Mr. Magonigle gives them in his masterly drawings."¹⁸⁶ Magonigle's influence was again praised after his death on August 29, 1935. Francis P. Sullivan, in a eulogizing essay for *Pencil Points* wrote of Magonigle, "This was a man of brilliant and varied talents, an artist with an enduring record of accomplishment . . . A draughtsman of the greatest

¹⁸³ In the preface for *The Nature, Practice and History of Art*, Thomas R. Kimball wrote: "I foresee for this book a widespread and lasting influence for the betterment of artistic appreciation, architectural draughtsmanship, and last, but not least, architecture itself." Thomas R. Kimball, "Preface," in Harold Van Buren Magonigle, *The Nature, Practice and History of Art* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), vii. Swales wrote of Magonigle's *Architectural Rendering in Wash*, ". . . a useful guide . . . as necessary to the young draughtsmen's equipment as his scale or compass." Swales, *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925): 66.

¹⁸⁴ Swales, *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925): 65.

¹⁸⁵ Francis P. Sullivan, "A Conscientious Artist," *Pencil Points* 16 (October 1935): 522. Sullivan described Magonigle's design as "[C]lassical in its background and origin, imbued with a scholarship as broad as it is unobtrusive . . . (with) no interest in or desire to achieve an lifeless archaeological correctness." *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Swales, *Pencil Points* 6 (March 1925): 47.

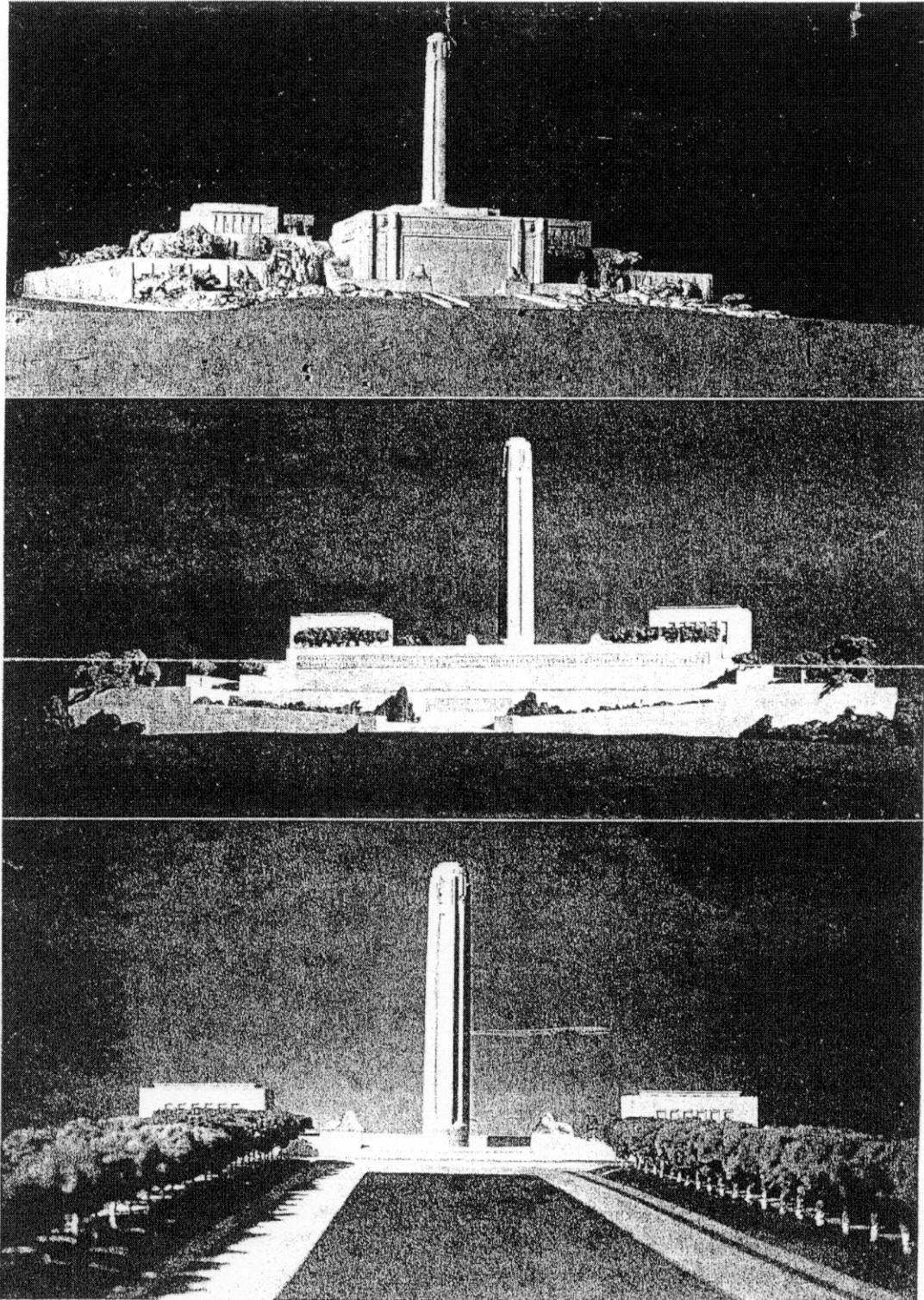
sensitiveness and facility”¹⁸⁷ He remembered the architect’s “great service to his contemporaries . . .
(as his persistence) in keeping before them by word and by example the truth that architecture is an art and
that ‘in the arts is most of the beauty of the world and of life in the world; subtract them and the world is
like a waterless desert.’ ”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Sullivan, *Pencil Points* 16 (October 1935): 522.
¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

APRIL, 1923.

ARCHITECTURE

PLATE L.XI.



LIBERTY MEMORIAL, KANSAS CITY, MO.
H. Van Buren Magonigle, Architect.

Top—Model made from competition drawing.
Middle—Final design. From the station plaza. Foreground not developed.
Bottom—Final design from the south, showing mall.



Construction Photograph
July 24, 1923 3:30 p.m.
Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.

This to certify that this
picture was taken by me on
July 24, 1923, at 3:30 p.m.

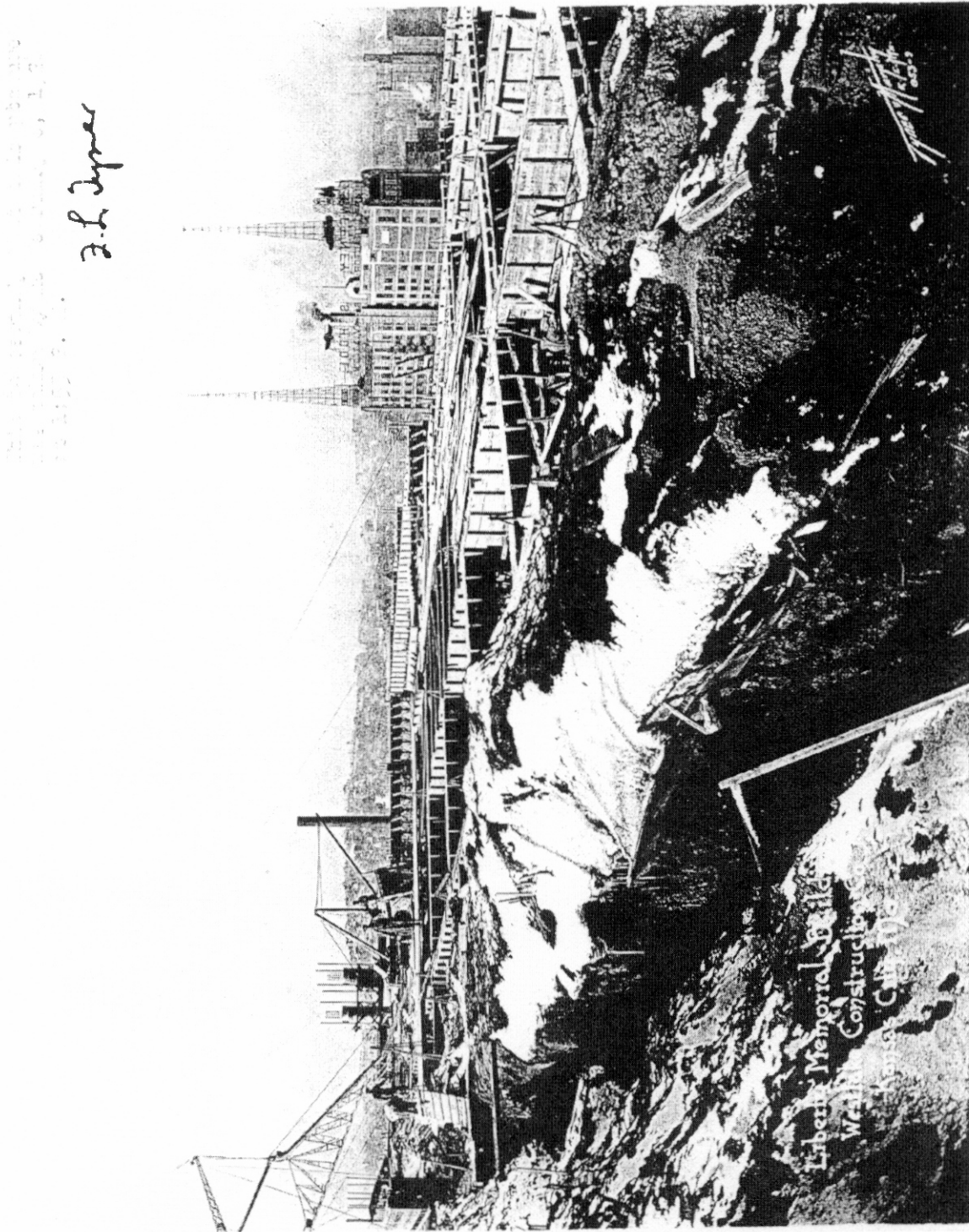
E. L. Dwyer



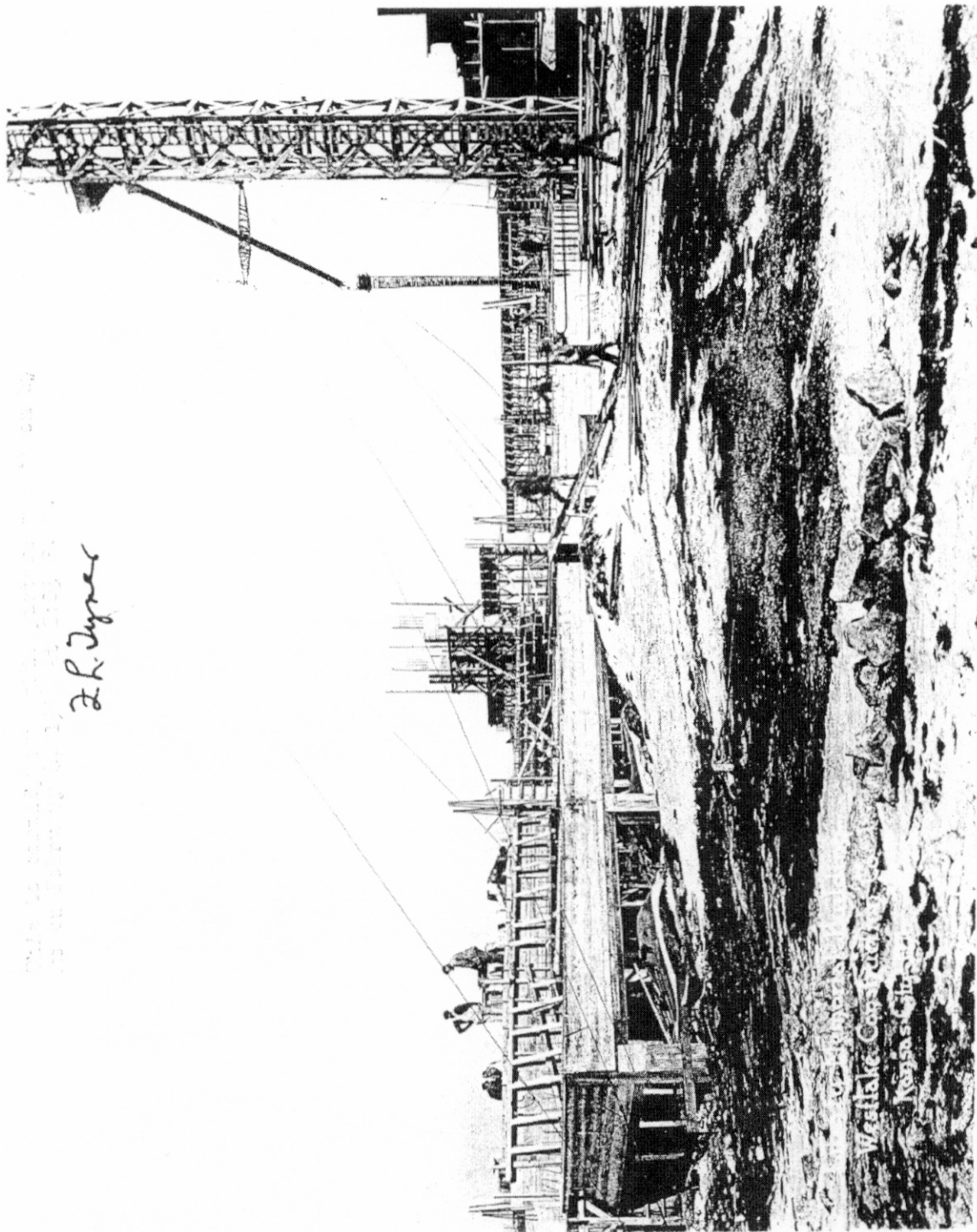
Construction Photograph
July 24, 1923 3:30 p.m.
Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.



Construction Photograph
July 24, 1923 3:30 p.m.
Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.

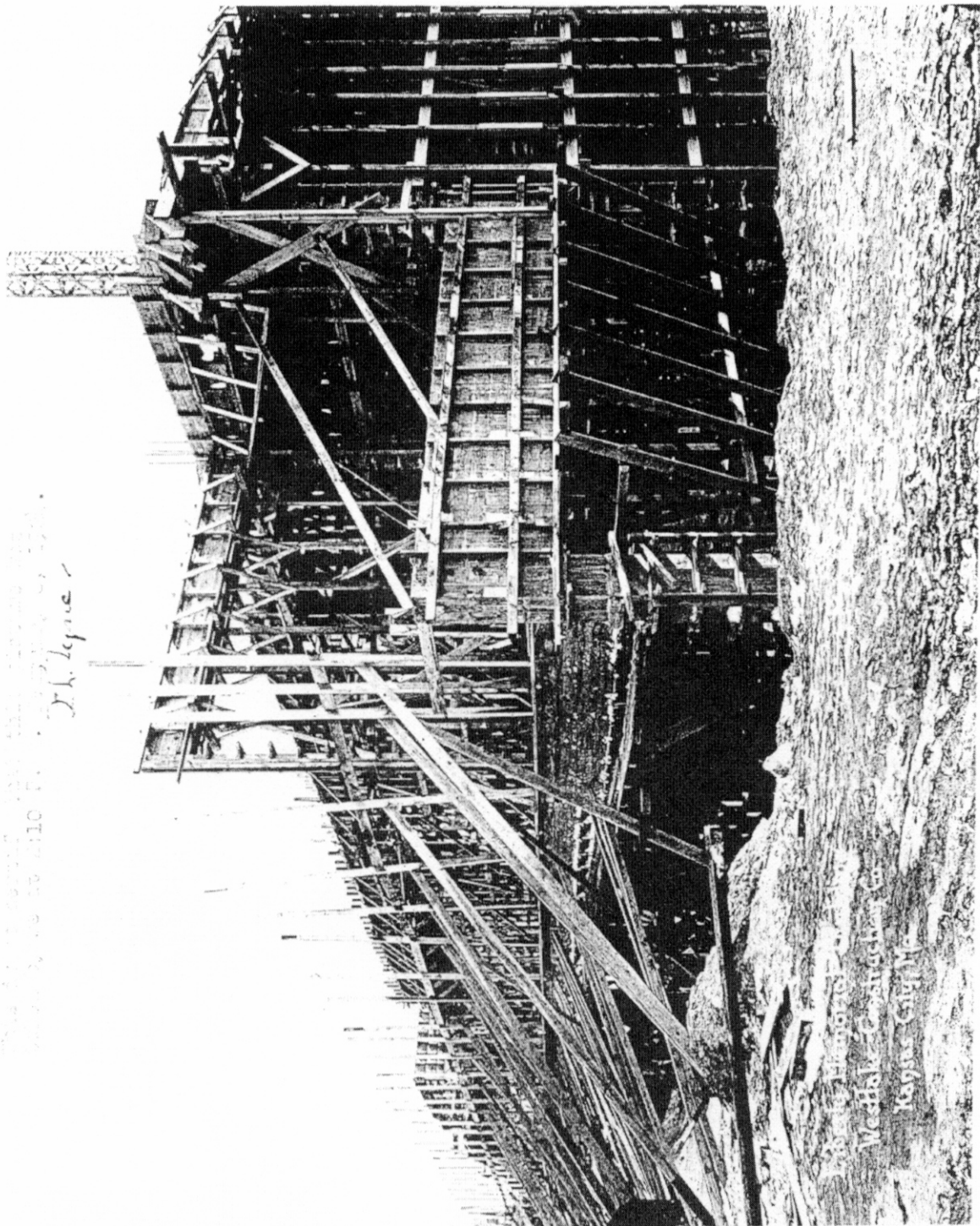


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University of Missouri – Kansas City.

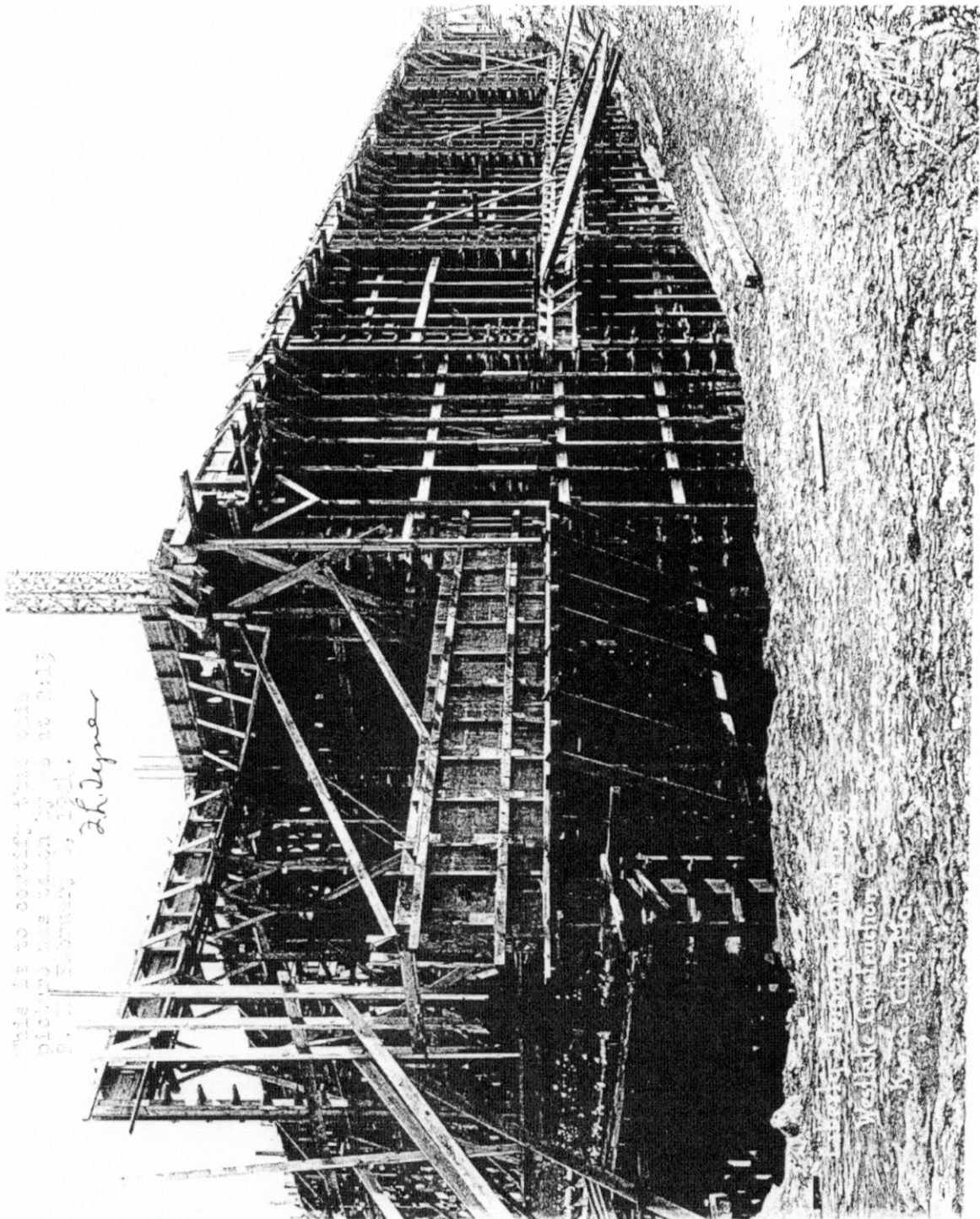


Z. L. Jynes

Construction Photograph
February 6, 1924 2:05 p.m.
Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.



Construction Photograph
February 6, 1924 2:10 p.m.
Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.

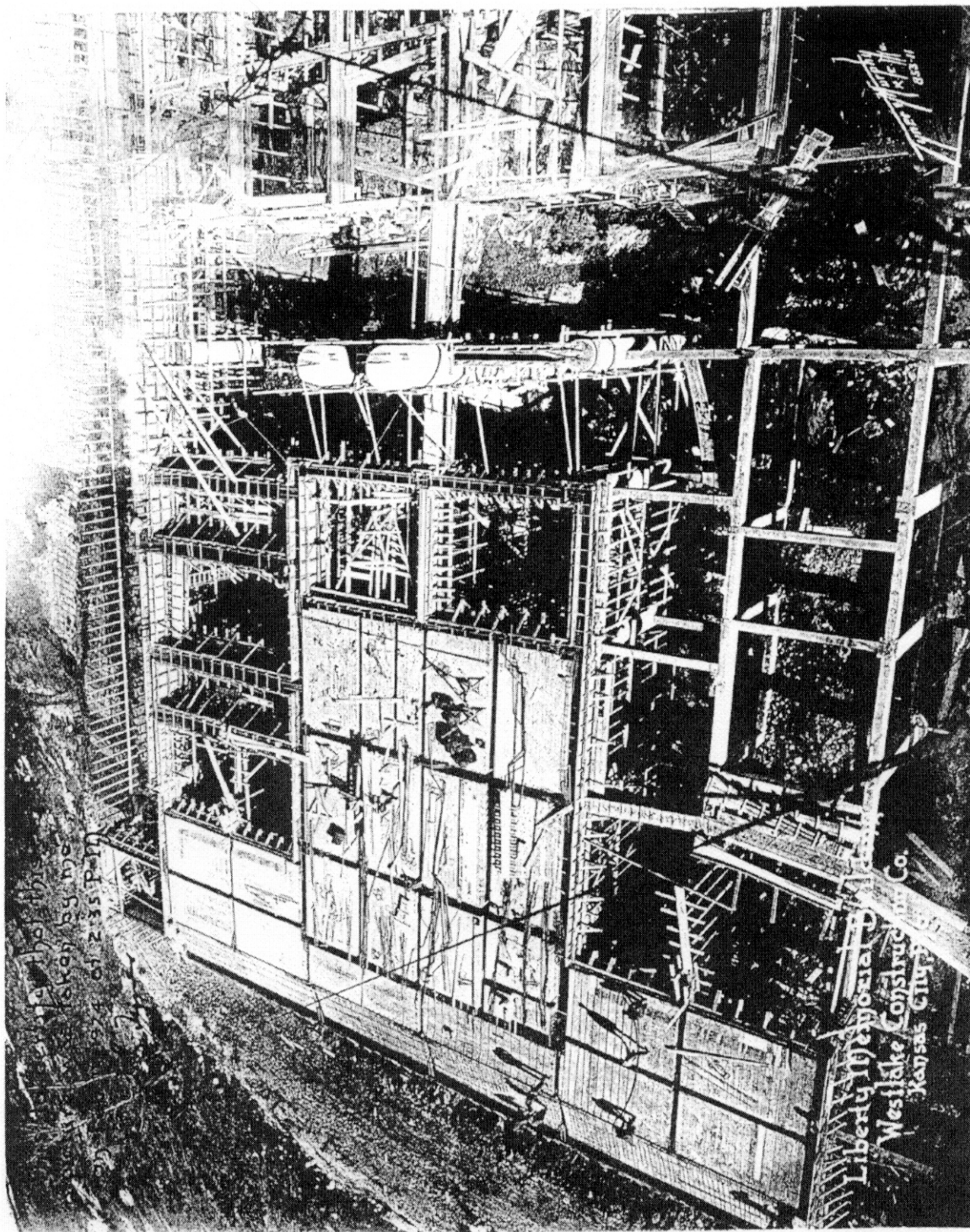


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University of Missouri – Kansas City.

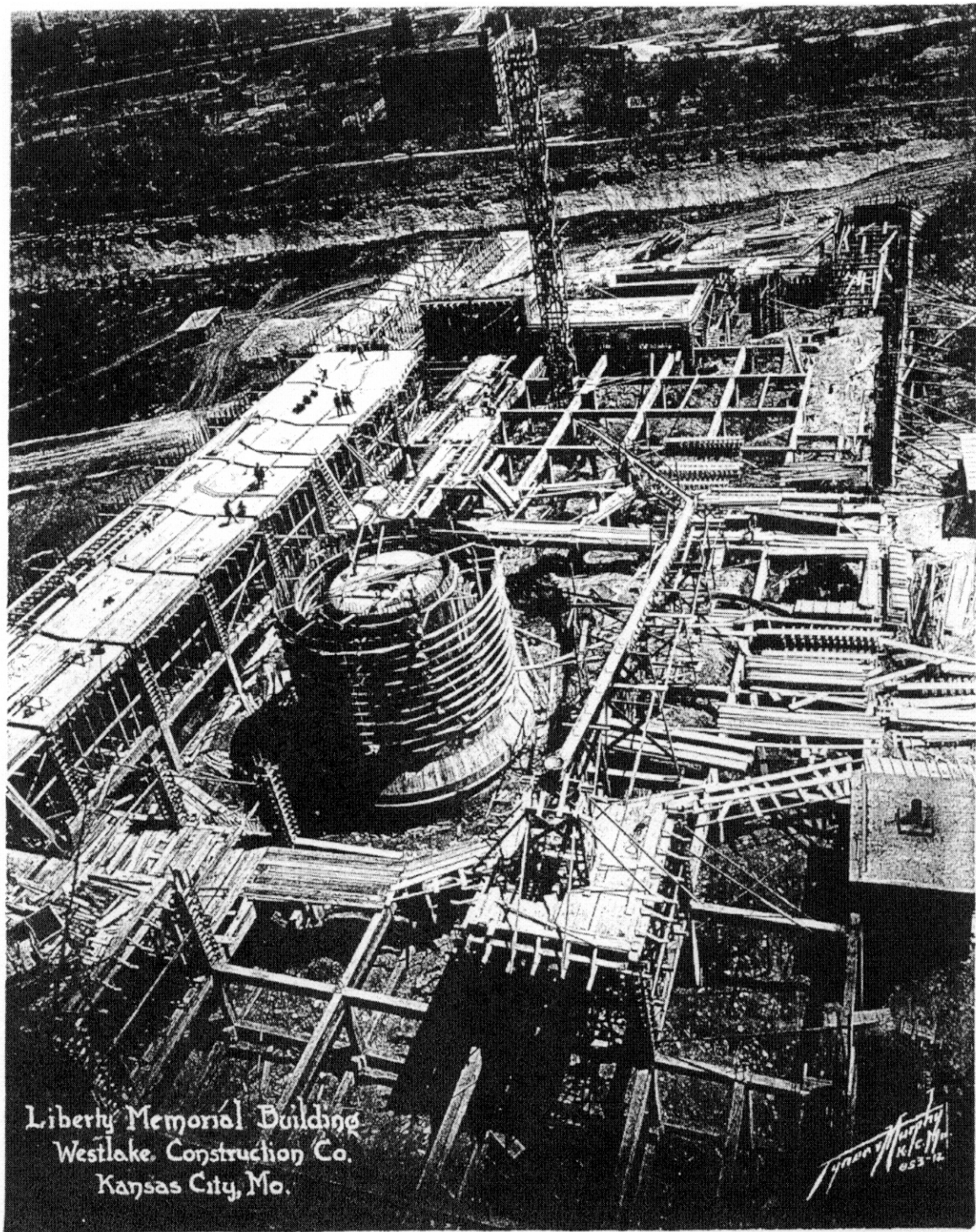


Liberty Memorial Building
Westlake Construction Co.
Kansas City, Mo.

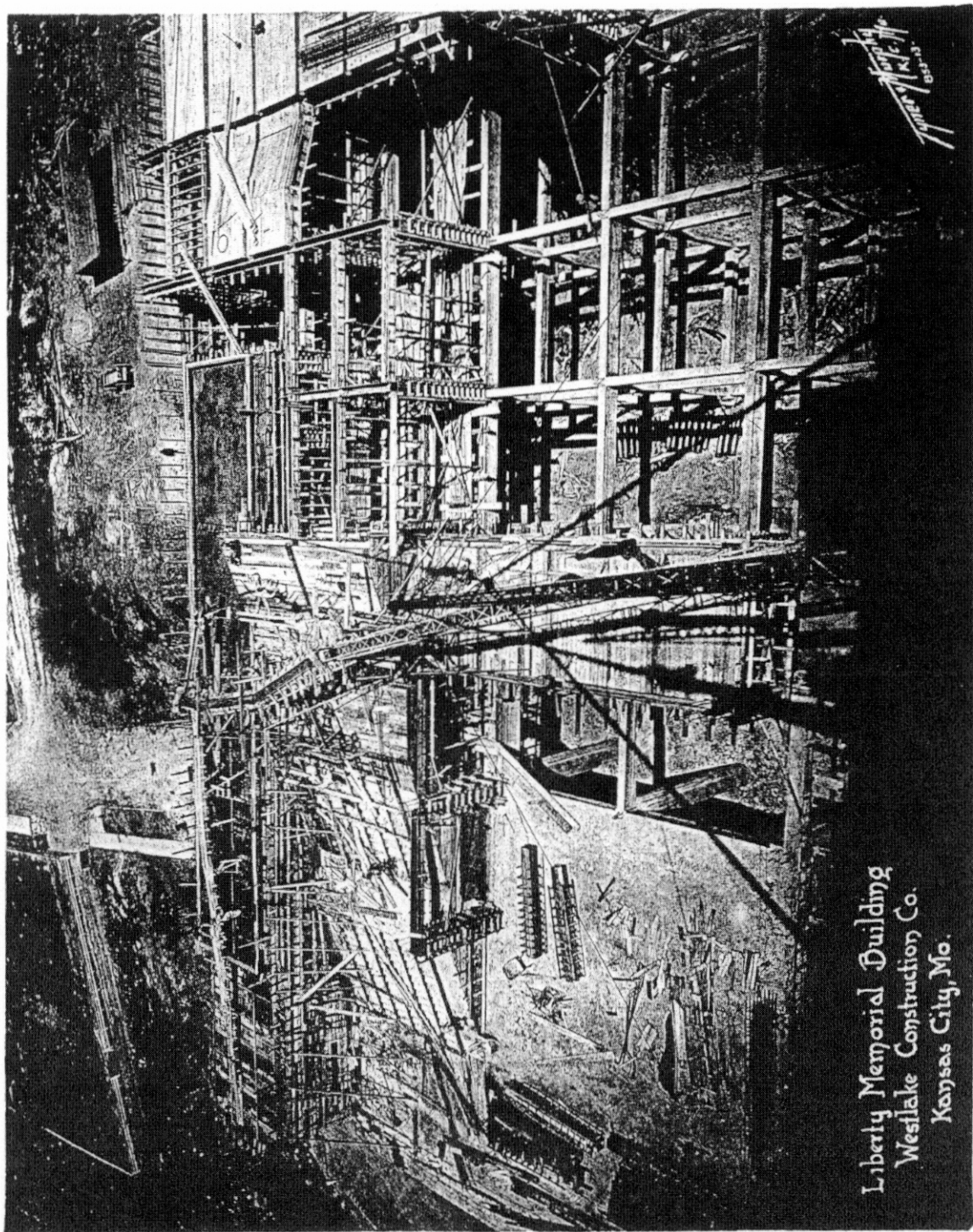
Construction Photograph
(No Date)
Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.



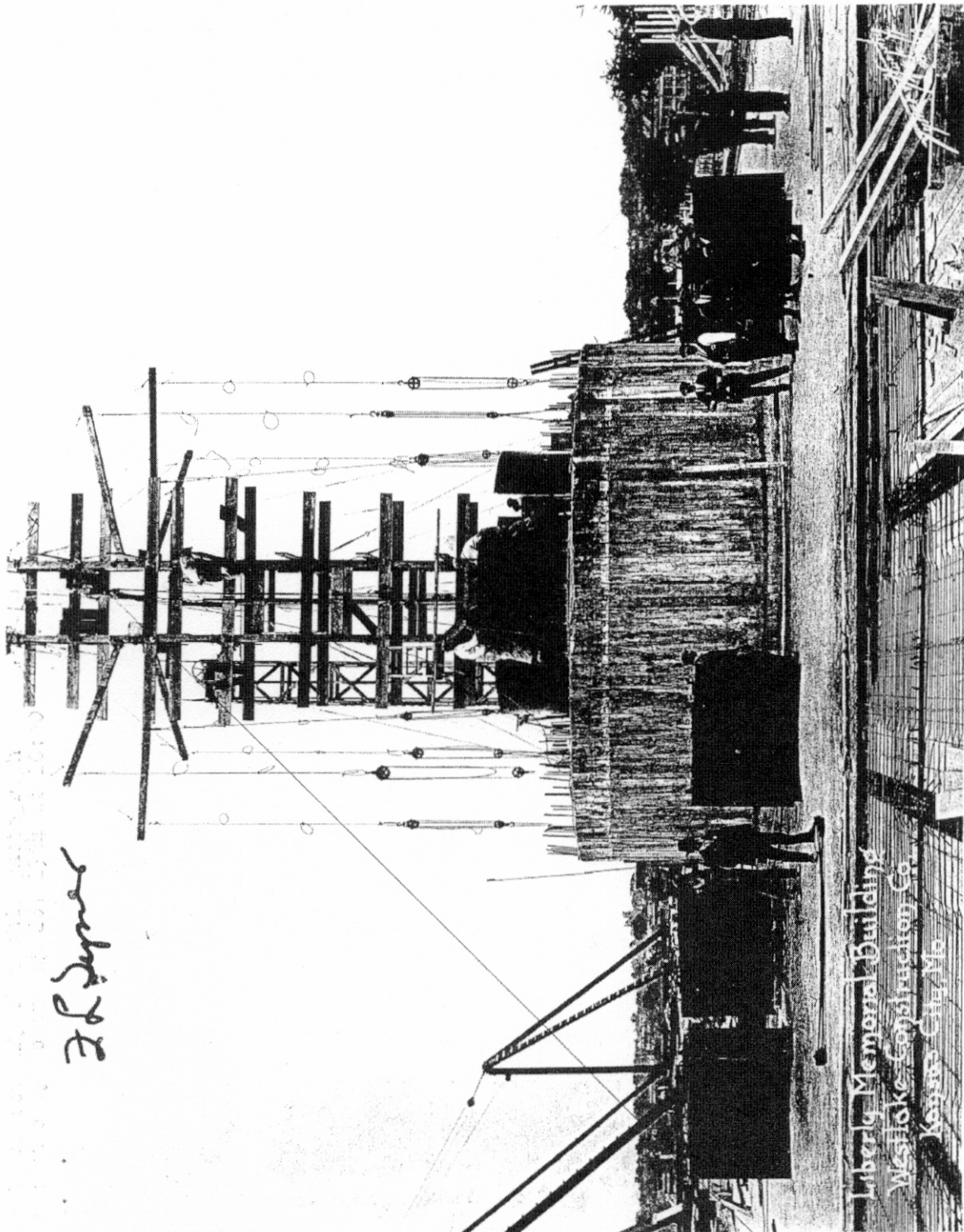
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Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.



Construction Photograph
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Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.

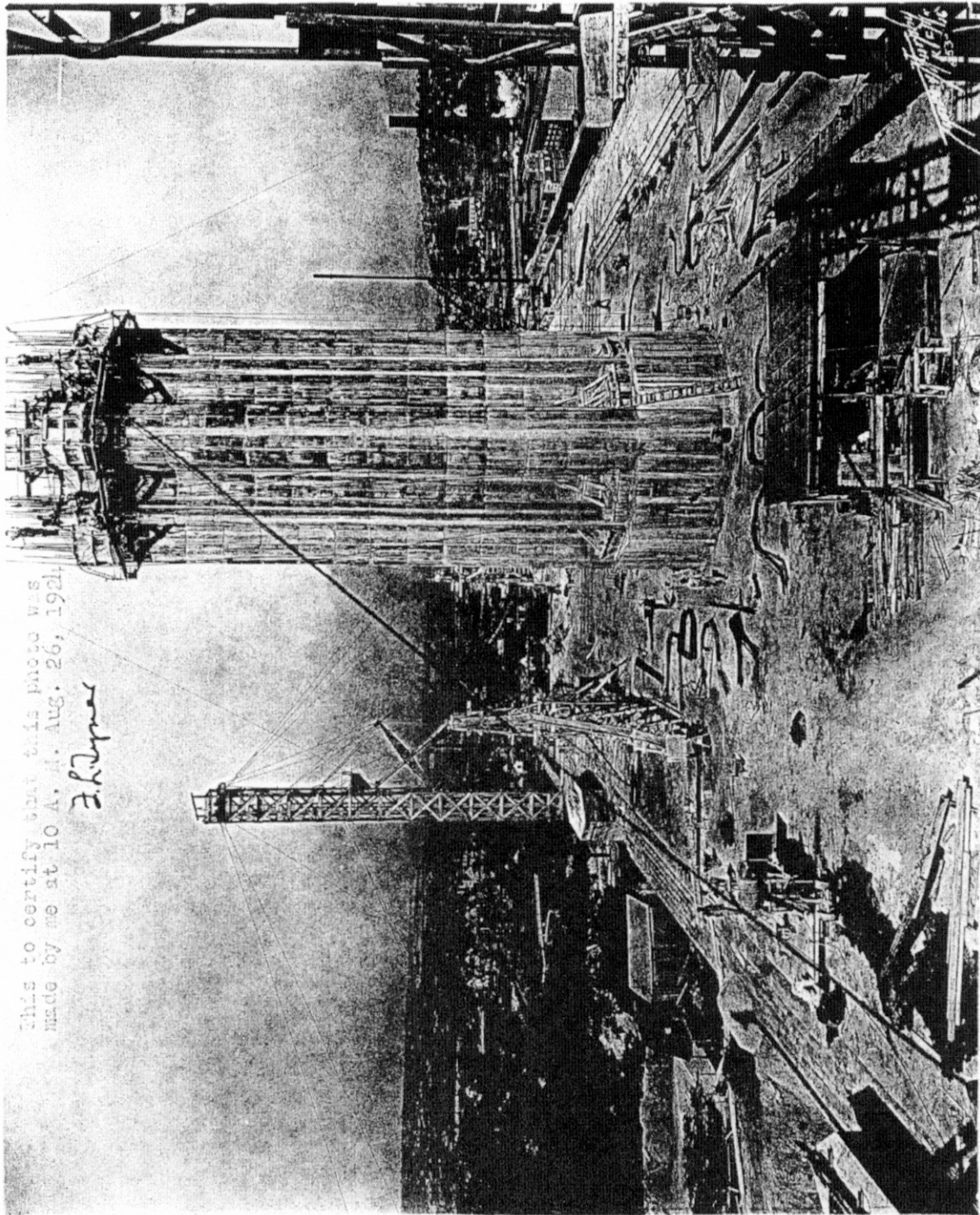


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University of Missouri – Kansas City.

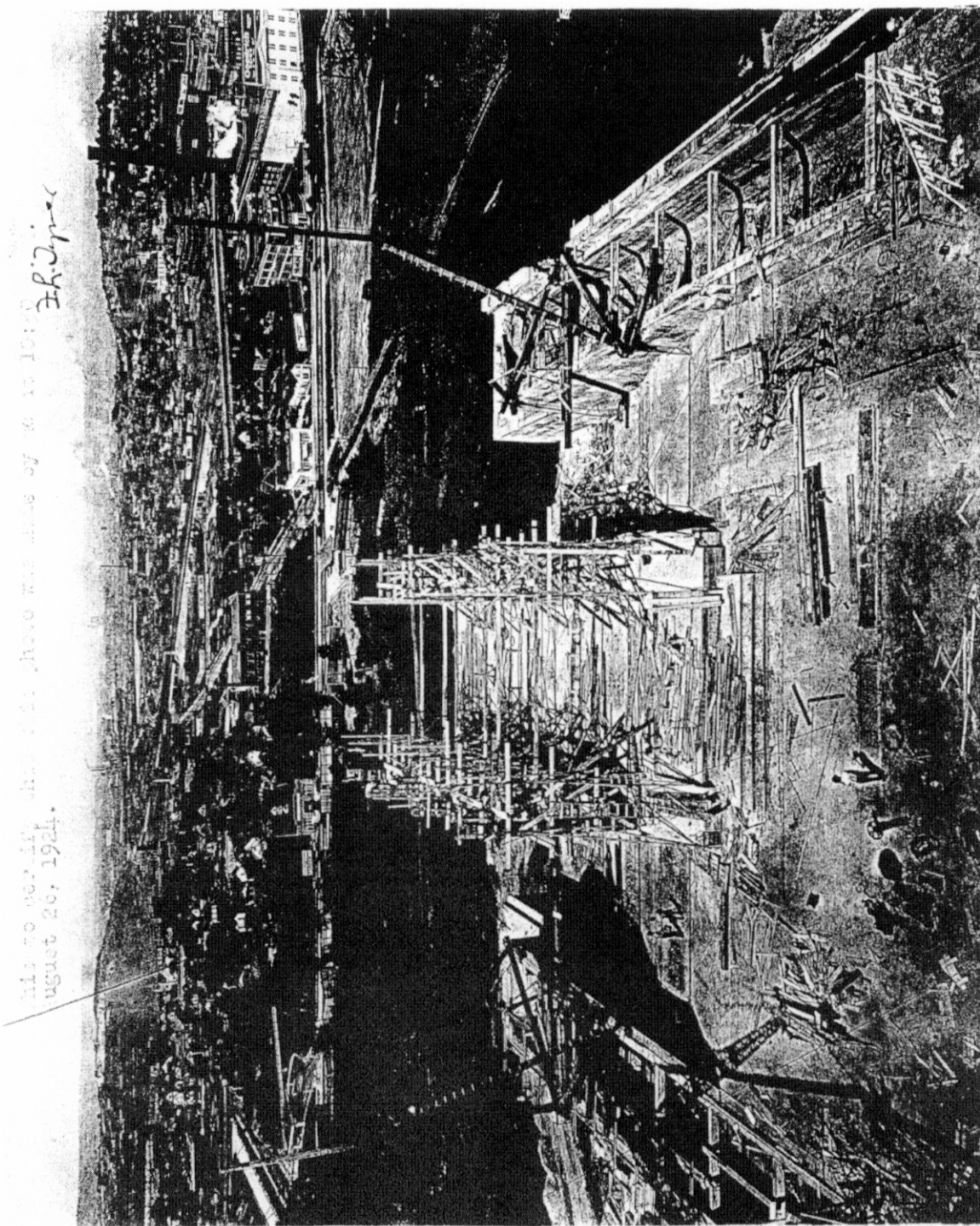


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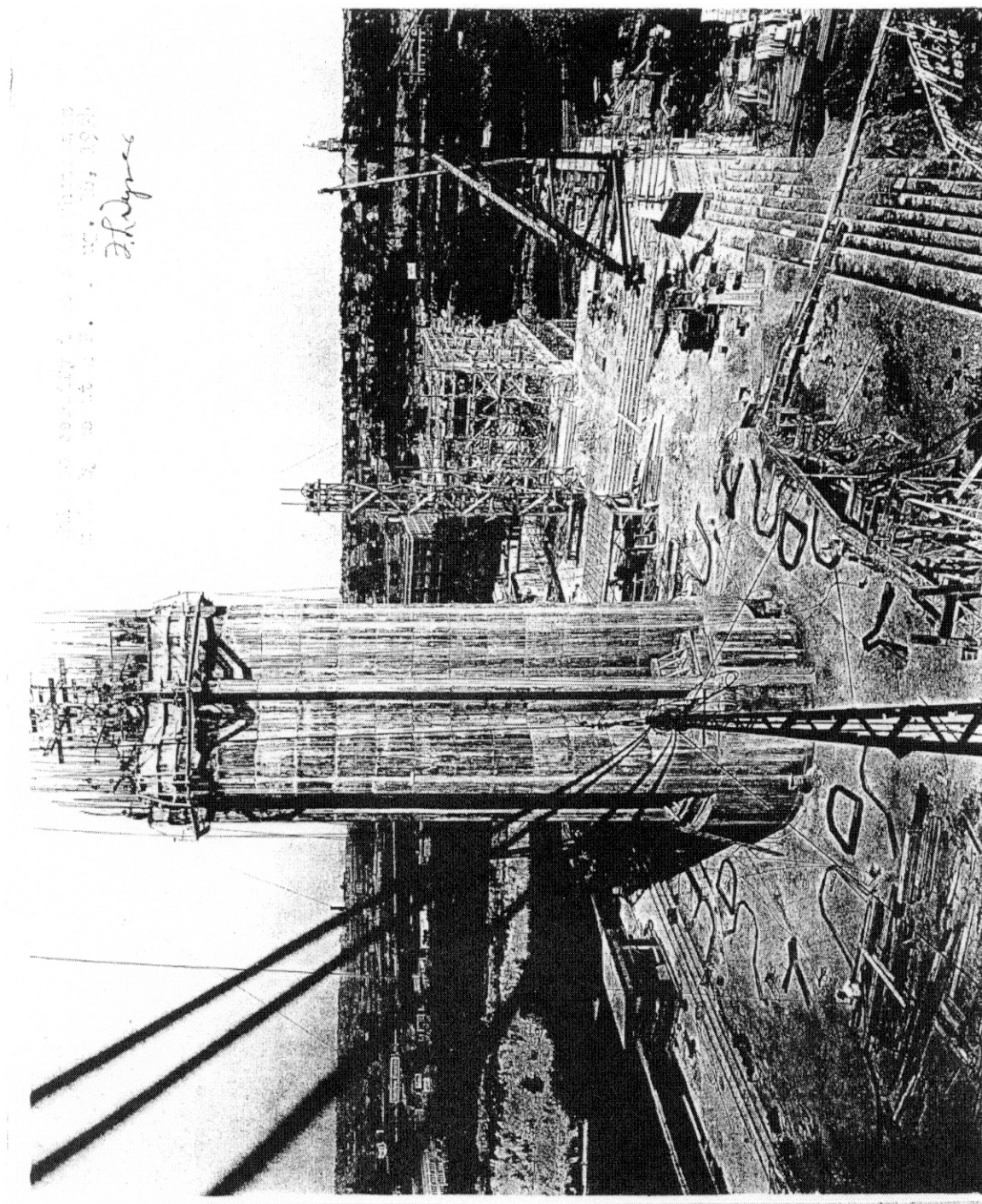
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Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.



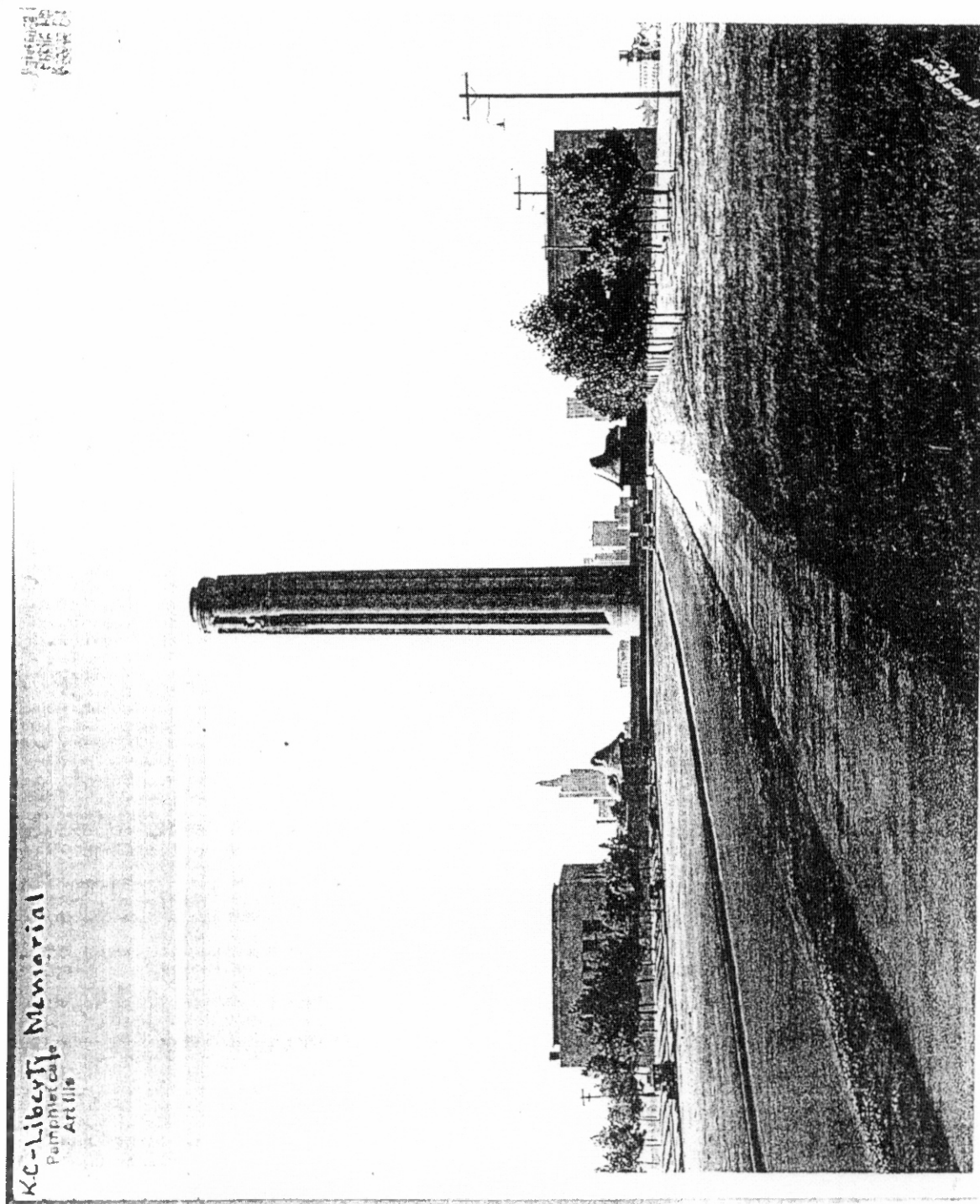
Construction Photograph
August 26, 1924 10:00 a.m.
Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.



Construction Photograph
August 24, 1924 10:30 a.m.
Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.



Construction Photograph
August 24, 1924 2:00 p.m.
Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.



Liberty Memorial c. 1938
Source: Western Historical Manuscript Collection
University of Missouri – Kansas City.

Liberty Memorial, Kansas City, Missouri

A Chronology

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| November 9, 1918 | Celbe C. Cline, editor of <i>The Kansas City Journal</i> , called for the construction of a Victory Monument to honor "the regiments of youthful crusaders who gloriously asserted their manhood at Soissons and St. Mihiel and a Sedan . . . a memorial befitting their achievement." |
| November 25, 1918 | The Joint Councilmanic Committee of the City Council contacted Kansas City businessman and civic leader Robert Alexander Long regarding a meeting to discuss an appropriate memorial. |
| November 29, 1918 | R. A. Long was appointed chairman of the Memorial Committee. |
| December 12, 1918 | First meeting of the Memorial Committee |
| December 16, 1918 | The name Liberty Memorial Association was chosen for the committee. The Committee of One Hundred was named. The Committee of One Hundred and Fifty, a temporary advisory committee, also was formed. |
| January 9, 1919 | J. C. Nichols was elected Vice Chairman of the Liberty Memorial Association. The idea for a "Victory Monument" was proposed. |
| January 18, 1919 | Long consulted Thomas Kimball, president of the AIA, with regard to the memorial. Kimball referred him to Harold Van Buren Magonigle, "whose splendid conception of the whole problem of monuments led to his past appointment as chairman of the AIA's Committee on War Memorials." Late in January, Magonigle communicated with Long. |
| January 16 through
March 21, 1919 | Thirteen public meetings regarding the monument were held. Chicago architects D. H. Perkins and Jarvis Hunt, as well as H. Van Buren Magonigle spoke. Committee "C" on Public Opinion, Memorial and Location surveyed monuments in other cities. |
| February 13, 1919 | A resolution by the Sixth Joint Committee of the Liberty Memorial Association adopted the following resolution.
"Whereas the foremost artists of our country and of the other allied countries have, as part of their contribution to the war, put their best and most inspired work into war posters, and any war museum which Kansas City may in [the] future establish should have a set of these posters, which have played so picturesque and valuable a part in the prosecution of the war, now since they are of a fragile and perishable character and are being rapidly lost and destroyed and it is important that the |

collection be made as soon as possible . . ." (see entry, July 7, 1920.)

March 1919

It was decided that the monument would be located in Kansas City, Missouri.

March 13, 1919

Magonigle presented the historical evolution of memorial monuments including a number of his own designs. He advised that money be secured first, then an architect and site be chosen.

April 3, 1919

Committee "C" presented a ballot listing seven possibilities of what the monument should be to the Committee of One Hundred and the Committee of One Hundred and Fifty. The choice was for a "MONUMENT PLUS A BUILDING, not for utilitarian purposes." To implement this decision, five committees including one on Architect, Location and Finance were named.

October 27 through
November 5, 1919

Pledges of \$2,051,506.57 were secured for the memorial. 83,000 subscribers, one-fourth of the population of Kansas City participated.

January 24, 1920

The Liberty Memorial Committee on Location recommended the 173-1/2 acre site south of Union Station Plaza for the location of the memorial (134 feet above Station Plaza). Regarding this decision, Magonigle wrote a letter of congratulations to the Association.

February 11, 1920

By ordinance of the City Council, condemnation proceedings were begun by the city to acquire this ground for park purposes. As part of ruling, the Liberty Memorial Association was permitted to erect the memorial on part of this site.

March 3, 1920

Thomas Kimball was named to advise and confer with the Committee on Architect. Kimball decided "to hold a competition in which certain architects of the U.S. known for their ability and accomplishments in the line of memorials, should be invited to compete and in which all local architects should be invited to compete."

July 7, 1920

James Burton, Jr., assistant secretary for the Liberty Memorial Association made arrangements with R. A. Long to store a collection of World War I posters until they could be moved to the Memorial Building. Long stated that the posters were of a considerable investment.

Summer 1920

Sixty-three Kansas City architects were asked to nominate architects of national reputation. Fifteen responded; two proposed only local architectural firms. The list was generally in agreement with the tentative list prepared by the Committee

on Architect: Bliss & Faville, (San Francisco); Paul P. Cret and Zantzinger, Borie & Medary, (Philadelphia); Bertram G. Goodhue (New York); H. Van Buren Magonigle (New York); and York & Sawyer (New York).

It was also agreed that funds for the structure were limited to \$1.5 million.

July 12, 1920

Five judges were chosen for the competition: W.R.B. Wilcox (Seattle); John Gamble Rogers (New York); Louis Ayres (New York); Henry Bacon (NY); John M. Donaldson (Detroit). Their identity was not publicly known.

Henry F. Hoit, president of the Kansas City Chapter of the AIA, made it clear that he took exception to what he saw as preferential treatment for Magonigle. The result of this discord was a rift in the KC branch of the AIA; twenty-five members resigned to form the Kansas City Architects League.

October 14, 1920

At a meeting of the Committee of One Hundred, which had become the Board of Trustees of the incorporated Liberty Memorial Association, Thomas Kimball prepared for the architects competition for the memorial.

December 8, 1920

Competition Program adopted.

December 27, 1920

Competition Program approved.

February 1, 1921

Architects competition began. The competition required that the drawings should bear no return address or identifying mark of the architect.

March 15, 1921

The memorial committee's Professional Advisor ceased answering questions.

June 15, 1921

Deadline for competition drawings.

June 15-June 28, 1921

Judgement and announcement made. Fifteen architectural firms were listed as participants in the competition: Bliss and Faville (San Francisco); Paul P. Cret and Zantzinger, Borie & Medary (Philadelphia); Bertram G. Goodhue (New York); H. Van Buren Magonigle (New York); York & Sawyer (New York); A. B. Anderson; Brostrom & Drotts; E. B. Delk; Greenebaum, Hardy & Shumacher; Samuel M. Hitt; Hoit, Price & Barnes; Keene & Simpson; Selby H. Kurfiss; Wight & Wight; and C. M. Williams, all of Kansas City, Missouri.

York and Sawyer, New York, withdrew. Kansas City firms that withdrew included A. B. Anderson, Samuel M. Hitt, and C. M. Williams.

June 28, 1921

The Board of Trustees met at the Hotel Muehlebach to hear the jury's report.

Federal Judge Arba S. VanValkenburgh announced that the winner of the competition was Harold Van Buren Magonigle. A resolution ratifying the decision was unanimously carried. Magonigle was informed by wire that he had been appointed architect.

June 29, 1921

The *Kansas City Times* reported the selection of Magonigle as architect. In addition, Magonigle's associates were named: George E. Kessler, landscape architect; Edith Magonigle, in charge of painting; Robert Aitken, memorial sculptor.

November 1, 1921

Liberty Memorial site was dedicated. R. A. Long, in a letter to an associate, admitted that, "It was only under pressure that we agreed to have the dedication of the site on that date." The dedication was held concurrently with the American Legion Convention.

The parade, preparation, and decoration of the site cost the Liberty Memorial Association approximately \$8,000. To defray costs, 11,000 Liberty Memorial Medallions were sold at \$1 a piece. As a result, the Association realized a profit of \$7,000.

November 3, 1921

Magonigle discussed his plans with the Board of Governors.

Magonigle was to be in no way bound beyond the "architectural development of the memorial proper."

November 4, 1921

Resolution unanimously adopted by the Board of Governors approving the "general conception embodied in the sketches submitted by Magonigle in competition."

April 5, 1922

George Kessler presented traffic pattern plans, a recommendation for the axis of the Memorial and Art Center and for its elevation. Magonigle presented revised drawings; the diameter of the shaft had increased 5' and the height had been raised by 46'. Magonigle's amended plans were approved by the Board.

June 7, 1922

Hughes Bryant was named as advisor to assist the architect, in obtaining competitive bids, letting contracts and to keep records.

Approval was given to revised plans dated April 13, 1922, as well as "so much of the plans" shown as Scheme A agreed upon April 5.

November 14, 1922 Magonigle submitted report dated October 17, 1922 (as revised November 8, 1922), to the Board of Governors. He scraps Scheme A with enlarged dimensions, because of cost. He had therefore designed scheme B based on dimensions of the original competition plans. However, the plan based on the least costly materials far exceeded available funds.

November 17, 1922 At a Board of Governors meeting, Magonigle discussed money-saving measures including moving the axis of the shaft east and north within a radius of 25'. The Board stated that the \$1,600,000 was to be the absolute maximum amount, even though Magonigle protested it was not enough.

December 2, 1922 Magonigle presented a new plan. The original north-thrusting T-shape was modified to an east-west crossbar. Magonigle explained that he eliminated all extraneous features, all retaining walls, approaches and steps as conceived in the original drawings, because the Board could not afford them. Long noted that the new plan had completely eliminated any means of approach from the north. In spite of concerns, Magonigle's revised plans were approved.

March 19, 1923 George Edward Kessler died.

Magonigle released a complete set of plans and specs dated February 24, 1923, to an east coast contractor.

April 27, 1923 Board of Governors accepted and approved plans and specifications for the shaft, two buildings, the north wall, and memorial court with steps descending to east and west, for the purpose of advertising for bids.

May 7, 1923 Board of Governors approved the release of plans and specifications to contractors to be returned on or before June 4.

May 10, 1923 J. C. Nichols presented final plans at a meeting of the City Plan Commission. The plans were unanimously approved.

June 11, 1923 Ten bids for construction were considered. Westlake Construction Company (St. Louis), with a low bid of \$1,150,000, was awarded the contract.

June 12, 1923 Magonigle announced that he planned to nominate his wife, Edith, as sculptor for the frieze of the north wall.

June 13, 1923	Board of Governors met to consider the nomination.
June 14, 1923	Magonigle stated to the Board of Governors that he was given authority to choose his collaborators (see June 29, 1921). He describes the relief: 400' long and 13' high; \$40,000-\$50,000 to produce models of the artwork.
July 2, 1923	Construction of the Liberty Memorial began.
September 12, 1923	Geologic problems brought work to a halt. Magonigle's estimates had not taken the actual site into consideration. A report by Hool and Johnson called for changes in footings and structure because of honeycombed grottoed rock and muddy clay that had been discovered at the site. The report also stated that there was a firm and dependable "Calico Ledge," but a new procedure had to be devised. A method referred to as the "new five-foot cylinder plan" to provide stable footing was recommended.
November 1, 1923	A letter from Magonigle stated that the shaft: 'was to rest on the Calico Ledge, the foundation to have a diameter of 43 feet, which is that of the present excavation, protecting the shale between the Sandwich Ledge and the Calico Ledge by omitting the forms against the shale and letting the concrete fill all irregularities in the excavation.' and the Museum Building: "was to be carried on five-foot cylinders throughout to go to the Calico Ledge like those already in place." and the Legion Building (Memory Hall): "if necessary to sink five-foot cylinders to the Calico Ledge . . . the design of columns, bracing beams, etc., above ground to be adjusted as most economical according to the type of footing found necessary."
January 18, 1924	Construction on Liberty Memorial resumed.
July 2, 1924	Inter-Union disputes halted work.
October 24, 1924	All but 15 feet of the shaft had been constructed.
November 9, 1924	Cornerstone was laid.
May 24, 1924	Col. Kealy contributed to the Liberty Memorial Association a complete set of uniforms for use in the continuing exhibit in either the Legion Building or Museum Building.

February 24, 1925

The east building, formerly referred to as the Legion Building, was renamed Memory Hall.

May 8, 1925

Magonigle presented Edith Magonigle's concept for the 400-foot mural on the north terrace wall, "Progress of Civilization Toward Peace."

Nichols reported that any additional walls, terraces and steps on the north of the present north wall must be left for further consideration. Nichols urged that landscaping to the south should be completed immediately "on account of the proposed art museum and other buildings to be located south of the Memorial."

Nichols also reported that it would be impossible to construct Magonigle's lower walls and terraces and for a "re-study" for the purpose of eliminating some of the retaining walls as well as the elimination of the circular driveway on the north. The crucial question was "whether the steps and approaches or the frieze should be done first."

Magonigle stressed the importance of the frieze, stating that the Memorial looked like a fortress, even a penitentiary. Magonigle stated in a letter to the Board of Governors that "The meaning of the Liberty Memorial is decidedly not warlike. It is a Peace Memorial."

Magonigle reviewed various plans for treatment of the north part of the site including one he completed in 1922 with an oval drive and an earlier scheme by Kessler, with a lower, shorter approach.

July 13, 1925

The adoption of a modified plan for the Liberty Memorial grounds with the north end of Main street hill sliced off and the oval in front restricted to pedestrians was announced. Changes made in the interest of economy eliminated the additional stone walls and approaches shown in Magonigle's first scheme.

September 18, 1925

Bronze ring, designed to produce a sixty-foot plume of steam, was installed.

October 1, 1925

Nichols recommended a competition for the purpose of securing an artist to execute the mural painting for Memory Hall. The choice was made without competition. Jules Guerin (New York), the artist of the Lincoln Memorial murals, was nominated.

January 19, 1926

Guerin's mural sketch was completed.

March 24, 1926
Collection of War Ordnance delivered to the Liberty Memorial Association from the Benicia Arsenal to be displayed in the Museum Building.

May 3, 1926
Guerin's mural completed. Fee for the work: \$18,000.

May 8, 1926
Kansas City Art Commission recommended major changes for Liberty Memorial including an Art Center and Music Hall.

June 23, 1926
The Board of Governors decided not to consider the north wall frieze.

July 1926
Landscaping matters were directed to the Liberty Memorial Association Committee on Grading and Landscaping.

October 14, 1926
The French Ministry of Foreign affairs donated fragments from the Cathedral at Rheims "to be placed amongst the collection in the monument erected in Kansas City in commemoration of the war of 1914-1918." These fragments "bear witness to the terrible results of a war which surpassed all former wars in devastation and horror."

Mid-October 1926
A series of twenty-five pictorial maps by D. Putnam Brinley (New York) showing spheres of military action were installed in Memory Hall.

October 22, 1926
Approval given to hiring Hare and Hare to prepare a plan for later planting immediately around the Memorial; plans were to be reviewed by Olmsted.

November 11, 1926
President Calvin Coolidge dedicated the Liberty Memorial to a crowd of 150,000. Coolidge, in his speech, stated [The Memorial] "has not been raised to commemorate war and victory but rather the results of war and victory which are embodied in peace and liberty." No reference to Magonigle was made during the ceremony.

R. A. Long's speech was entitled: "A Memorial to Liberty and Peace."

November 16, 1926
Nichols reported that funds from the estate of Mrs. William Rockhill Nelson would not be used for construction of an Art Museum on Memorial Hill.

Nichols also reported that steps were underway for erecting a unit of an Art Museum using Mary Atkins funds.

Jay M. Lee, Chairman of the Trophies Committee of the Liberty Memorial Association reported that the committee was given the duty of "establishing the War Museum for the use of which the west hall of the Liberty Memorial was designated." In the minutes it was stated that display cases and cabinets

were provided "for the use of the Museum." Furthermore, the committee stated that many "commemorative gifts were to be placed in this Museum."

November 26, 1926

Liberty Memorial Association officers were elected. George S. Carkener was elected president.

The Board of Governors officially rejected Edith Magonigle as sculptor for the relief.

December 22, 1926

The Board of Governors discussed the termination of Magonigle's contract.

January 7, 1927

The Board decided to set aside the matter of the frieze and invited Magonigle to confer on completion of the Memorial on the north side.

April 6, 1927

After a visit to Kansas City, J. C. Nichols received a letter from Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., which generally outlined plans for the land surrounding the Liberty Memorial.

November 8, 1928

Kansas City's Park Board hired Hare and Hare to complete landscaping work launched by George Kessler. Olmsted, Jr. had previously made two trips to Kansas City, and in conjunction with S. Herbert Hare, made a study of the area.

January 1929

The Liberty Memorial Association stated that the memorial was still incomplete because of an increase in the total cost of construction resulted from: 1) the need for deeper footings required by previous geological surveys and 2) the cost of steps, terraces and approaches on the north as originally planned had totaled more than \$600,000. Because of this, the decision was made "to make a re-study of the treatment on the north with a view to reducing the cost."

December 20, 1930

The Board of Governors adopted specific procedures for terminating Magonigle's contract.

\$2000.00 was authorized to cover the cost of preparing a grading and landscaping plan to recommend to the city.

January 22, 1931

Plans for approaches and beautification of Union Station Plaza were approved by the Board of Park Commissioners (previously approved by the Liberty Memorial Association and Kansas City Terminal Railway). These plans were never implemented.

April 1931
Ten-Year Plan bonds provided \$450,000, of which \$100,000 was made available for grading around the Memorial and to build Kessler Road.

April 29, 1932
Nichols reported that Olmsted, Jr., stated that treatment of the 8-1/2 acres surrounding the Liberty Memorial was the most difficult problem he had ever encountered and that he was reluctant to undertake the work.

June 21, 1932
Olmsted, Jr., assisted by Percival Gallagher, made arrangements with the Board to oversee the completion of landscape planning. S. Herbert Hare, William D. Wight, David E. Long, W. H. Dunn and J. V. Lewis were chosen to complete the project for the north approach.

July 1, 1932
The Board of Governors gave tentative approval for a plan for the north approach.

Contract between Olmsted Brothers (Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., James F. Dawson, Percival Gallagher, Edward Clark Whiting and Henry Vincent Hubbard) and the Board of Park Commissioners for "a design, general plan and consultation for services for Memorial Hill," is approved.

November 29, 1932
Wight presented sketches of plans that included the proposed frieze on the north wall. Approval of plans was pending on the city's approval of plans for grading and landscaping.

March 29, 1933
Modifications in plans for steps, frieze, foundations, terrace walls, and architects commission was discussed. Olmsted and Wight and Wight agreed on architectural plans for Memorial completion.

April 11, 1933
Work on the north side of Liberty Memorial, per Olmsted's plans, began. Ten-Year Plan workers hauled rock away for use in Brush Creek construction.

April 18, 1933
Edmond Amateis, the lowest of four bidders, was chosen as sculptor for the north wall frieze. The size of the frieze was changed to 19' x 145' (see June 14, 1923).

June 8, 1933
Wight and Wight completed plans for north terrace walls, platforms, approaches and embellishments including fountains, frieze and steps to frieze court.

Specifications for the above were completed in June.

June 19, 1933	Amateis' plans for the frieze were generally approved.
August 10, 1933	Amateis' design was adopted unanimously.
December 1933 through February 1934	CWA workers graded and made fills for Kessler Road. CWA also hand-graded and constructed sidewalks and walls at the southeast section of the Memorial. Work was completed under the direction of W. H. Dunn, Superintendent of Parks and J. V. Lewis, Field Engineer for the park board, per Olmsted's plans.
January 1934	Work on the frieze began.
February 2, 1934	Wight and Wight complete plans for the Dedication Wall.
March 15, 1934	R. A. Long died.
May 13, 1934	Memorial for R. A. Long was held at Memory Hall.
August 29, 1935	Harold Van Buren Magonigle died.
November 10, 1935	Liberty Memorial frieze dedicated on Armistice Day Eve.
1938	The majority of the landscaping for the North Terrace, the Mall and the grounds immediately surrounding the Memorial, originally designed in 1933 by Olmsted Brothers, was completed.
1948	The 89th Division Memorial, designed by E. B. Delk, was dedicated. The memorial features a flagpole topped with a gold leaf eagle at the south entrance to the mall.
1958	Dedication of <i>Women in World War One</i> , a mural by Daniel MacMorris.
November 10-12, 1961	Rededication of the Liberty Memorial. Joyce Hall contributes "Bells of Peace," a 305-bell carillon claimed to be one of the five largest carillons in the world.
1976	First professional curator hired for the Museum.
1981	Exhibit galleries remodeled; addition of walk-through dug-out and trench.
1984	French government donated a rare, restored 75-millimeter cannon to the Museum.
1985-86	World War I posters from the Museum collection began national tour.

1990	Establishment of changing exhibits policy.
November 11, 1993	Liberty memorial hosts the 75th anniversary of the end of World War I on Veterans (Armistice) Day; representatives of the allied nations and World War I veterans attend.
November 8, 1994	Memorial complex closed to the public due to concerns of the structural integrity of the memorial's courtyards and stairways.
January 4, 1995	Special museum annex opened at the Town Pavilion building in Kansas City, Missouri.
July 1995	Abend Singleton Architects Inc., now ASAI, Kansas City, Missouri, Hammel Green and Abrahamson, Inc., Minneapolis, and Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Inc., New York, hired to restore Liberty Memorial to its original condition and expand the Museum.
March 19, 1996	Additional special museum annex opened at the Ward Parkway Center, Kansas City, Missouri.
1999-2000	Construction drawings for restoration prepared by ASAI; restoration and museum expansion scheduled.
2000-2001	Anticipate construction to be partially completed by November 11, 2001.

REPOSITORIES

The following is a comprehensive list of the many collections of manuscripts, drawings, and photographs related to the Liberty Memorial.

Avery Library, Columbia University, 1172 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10027. 212-854-4110.

This repository houses the H. Van Buren Magonigle Papers including a complete set of drawings for Liberty Memorial. Magonigle's original competition drawings for the Liberty Memorial are also on file. The collection was a gift of Edith Magonigle in 1939.

**The Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. Papers, and the Olmsted Associates Records, Manuscript Division,
Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. 202-707-5387.**

This important comprehensive collection includes correspondence papers (1933-1935), telegrams, newspaper clippings (1932-1933), contracts, and cost estimates pertaining to Olmsted Brothers' landscaping plan for Kansas City's Liberty Memorial and Penn Valley Park (Job No. 1256, Folder No. 2). The majority of the contents of these two files is listed below; actual plans and drawings are located at the Olmsted National Historic Site, Brookline, Massachusetts. Job No. 1256.

Letter to J. C. Nichols from Olmsted Brothers re: the frieze and steps at north; plan 1256-82A, 82B, 82C, 83.77A, 78 and 81. January 5, 1933.

Letter to Olmsted Brothers from Wight and Wight re: steps to frieze at north; receipt of drawing No. 1256-77, 78 and 79. January 12, 1933.

Letter to Olmsted Brothers from Wight and Wight re: north terrace scheme. February 20, 1933.

Letter to Olmsted Brothers from J. C. Nichols re: support of Wight and Wight. February 22, 1933.

Report of the Conference with Wight, Whiting, Gallagher re: plans for north frieze, panel, fountains, planting and station plaza design. March 3, 1933.

Letter to J. C. Nichols from Olmsted Brothers re: north side east and west walls. March 7, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers re: grading plan No. 1256-88 (finished grades for terraces). March 8, 1933; correction noted March 9, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers re: grading plan No. 1256-88, 1256-89. March 10, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers re: No. 1256-88; riser height for steps. March 13, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers re: Plan No. 1256-92; incorporation of the planting panel in the paved terrace and walks leading from the frieze court to each end of the memorial, met with approval. March 20, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers re: Plan No. 1256-88; general arrangement of walks, grades, etc., at north. March 27, 1933.

Letter to P. Gallagher from S. Herbert Hare re: criticism of proposed plants. April 1, 1933.

Letter to S. Herbert Hare from Olmsted Brothers re: plant list; waiting for plans for architectural work from Wight and Wight. April 4, 1933.

Letter to Olmsted Brothers from S. Herbert Hare re: Plan No. 1256-74; plant list and planting plan. April 20, 1933.

Letter to J. V. Lewis from Olmsted Brothers re: Plan No. 1256-19; grading for Main Street Ledge. April 26, 1933.

Letter to Wight and Wight from Olmsted Brothers re: completion of general planting plan No. 74 and plant list. June 14, 1933. Copy to J. V. Lewis and W. H. Dunn, June 15, 1933. The letter explains the concept of the summit of the hill south of the monument as a compact wood with the south axial approach to the Memorial cut through it, simulating a natural woodland.

Letter to Olmsted Brothers from Wight and Wight re: lighting the architecture of the new terrace. July 21, 1933.

Telegram to Olmsted Brothers from J. V. Lewis stating work had started on entire Liberty Memorial Plan under the Civil Works Administration. December 2, 1933.

Letter to Olmsted Brothers from Wight and Wight re: planting of maple trees per No. 105 dated October 26, 1933. December 2, 1933.

Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department Archives, 4600 East 63rd Street, Kansas City, MO 64130. 816-513-7643.

The archives contains a series of photographs illustrating grading, landscaping, road building and the construction of various elements of the east and north side of the memorial. In addition, there are several plans and drawings housed at this location.

Photographs:

Building wall at Main Street side; and terracing, wall construction on Memorial Hill; July through September 1932.

Continuation of wall construction, south on Main Street side, June 1934.

The construction of Kessler Road, 1934-1935.

Reconstruction of Pershing Road, c. 1934.

Earthwork on north side of Memorial, 1933-1935.

Construction of Fountain, c. 1935.

Construction of the east entrance to Penn Valley Park, 1933-1935.

Liberty Memorial Mall, 1933-1935.

Looking east from 27th and Central streets, 1933-1935.

Plans and Drawings

Plan for Surroundings, December 16, 1922, Kessler.	11.172
Study for approaches at Memorial Hill, November 15, 1923, Magonigle.	11.184
Study for approaches to the Art Museum, January 10, 1924, Magonigle.	11.185
Improvement of Station Plaza, May 1924, WH Dunn and S. Herbert Hare.	11.197
Nine foot terrace north side, May 1925, Magonigle.	11.198
General Study for Memorial Art Grounds, May 1925, Magonigle.	11.199
Steps and Terraces (detail), June 8, 1925, Magonigle.	11.202
Study for North Approach, March 17, 1927, WH Dunn and F. Gabelman.	11.213
Revised Plan for Station Plaza and Approach, December 23, 1930, Hare and Hare and W. H. Dunn.	11.244
Steps and fountains on north side, March 11, 1933, Wight and Wight.	11.259
North terrace walls, platforms, approaches and embellishments, June 8, 1933, Wight and Wight.	11.265

Dedication wall and approaches, December 12, 1933, Olmsted Brothers.	11.267
Liberty Memorial grounds, Pershing Road to 28th Street, May 5, 1937, William Ayers.	11.282
Plan for location of Memorial Trees at south end of Mall, August 28, 1942, Hare and Hare	11.329
Liberty Memorial and Mall, October 18, 1962, D. Rudolf	11.523

Liberty Memorial Archives, Kansas City, Missouri
100 W. 26th Street, Kansas City, MO 64108. 816-931-0749.

This repository contains the Liberty Memorial Association Minutes and Records, Mounted Press Clippings, 1918-1938, covering Liberty Memorial events, the Robert Alexander Long Papers, the George S. Carkener Papers and the Jerome E. McPherson Papers. There is also an extensive collection of Liberty Memorial related materials including competition drawings and accompanying texts, specifications, photographs and miscellaneous plans and drawings on microfilm.

Plans and Drawings on Microfilm:

Storage room in basement. Drawing No. 008; Work #164, n.d., Magonigle.

"Laying to the Cornerstone," October 28, 1924, Magonigle.

Two light standards for Memorial Court. Sketch No. 009, February 1, 1927, Magonigle.

Proposed Terraces and Approaches for preliminary estimate only. December 13, 1924, Magonigle.

Letters regarding grading from E. H. Bradbury to W. H. Dunn, November 24, 1924; W. H. Dunn to J. C. Nichols, December 2, 1924; Spitcaufsky Brothers to W. H. Dunn, n.d; W. H. Dunn to J. C. Nichols, August 30, 1924.

Assembly of Rings and Pins on Shaft Door, n.d.

Bronze Architrave and Entrance Door, Memory Hall. Drawing No. 0012, 1927; Magonigle.

Shrinkage Scale, details of ornamental bronze vestibule in west entrance of Memory Hall. Drawing 225, July 19, 1927, Magonigle.

Half Full Size and Shrinkage Scale, details of ornamental bronze vestibule in west entrance of Memory Hall with alphabets for lunette. Drawing No. 224, July 7, 1927, Magonigle.

Details of Light Standard. Elevation of base. Drawing No. 227, March 28, 1928.

Missouri Historical Society

P. O. Box 11940, 225 South Skinker Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63112. 314-746-4599

The George Kessler Collection contains correspondence of H. Van Buren Magonigle regarding Liberty Memorial.

J. C. Nichols to George Kessler re: Magonigle's plan, November 12, 1921.

George Kessler to J. C. Nichols re: topography, December 22, 1921.

George Kessler to J. C. Nichols re: site plans, January 17, 1922.

George Kessler to J. C. Nichols re: conferences, March 27, 1922.

George Kessler to J. C. Nichols re: criticism/observations of Magonigle's plans and the land north and south of Liberty Memorial, May 26, 1922.

George Kessler to R. A. Long re: Magonigle's drawing No. 0.001, Work No. 164, location of the center of the shaft and wall on Main Street, June 23, 1922 and July 21, 1922.

Memorandum of meeting attended by Magonigle, Kessler and Hughes Bryant to analyze the proposals submitted by Magonigle to the Board of Governors, November 14, 1922 and November 15, 1922.

Copy of estimate to grade the Memorial site, n.d.

George Kessler to J. C. Nichols re: detail of general plan, February 15, 1923.

Kessler to R. A. Long, re: Magonigle's revised plans, January 31, 1923.

Drawing showing location of Memorial, July 21, 1922.

Olmsted National Historic Site, 99 Warren Street, Brookline MA 02445. 617-566-1689.

Included in this extensive collection of the archives of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site are the plans, drawings and related materials of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. and the Olmsted Brothers. Materials relating to the Liberty Memorial/Penn Valley Park contain 210 plans dating from 1923-1934, two folders of plant lists dating from 1932-1933 and a collection of 74 photographs. "The archival collection represents a rare continuity of work by a single professional office and reflects the history of the development of landscape architecture and environmental design in the United States." This collection of materials is best used in tandem with the surviving correspondence records of the Olmsted firm that are housed at the Library of Congress. The list below highlights some of the more crucial materials pertaining to the Liberty Memorial:

Penn Valley Park; Elevation of Main Street Cut Showing Rock Strata, June 1932, Percival Gallagher.	1256-5
Plan of Union Station Plaza and Approach to Liberty Memorial, Kansas City, Missouri, January 20, 1931, Hare and Hare.	1256-11
Proposed North Approach to the Liberty Memorial, June 6, 1932, Wight and Wight.	1256-13, 15
Study for approach to Memorial Monument, July 19, 1932, Percival Gallagher.	1256-16
Penn Valley Park Kansas City, Missouri Original Grading Plan, August 19, 1932, Percival Gallagher.	1256-19
Profile of Kessler Drive to Accompany Plan No. 19, June 1932, Percival Gallagher.	1256-21
Study for Slope North of Memorial, August 19, 1932, Percival Gallagher.	1256-26, 29
South Entrance Studies, August 1932, Percival Gallagher.	1256-27
Plan for Drainage, Curbing and Paving Conforming to the General Plan for Improvement of the Mall South of Liberty Memorial, February 3, 1932, Drewin Wight.	1256-31
Sketch Plan for South Entrance to Memorial Mall, November 4, 1932, Percival Gallagher.	1256-67
View of Liberty Memorial from Main Street and Union Station, November 8, 1932. Perspective Sketch of Liberty Memorial. Charcoal.	1256-70
Charcoal Sketch of Liberty Memorial from West Door of Station, November 9, 1932.	1256-71
Penn Valley Park Planting Plan, June 1933, Percival Gallagher.	1256-74

Study for Treatment of North Terrace and Central Approach to 77A North Terrace of Memorial, January 3, 1933, Percival Gallagher.	1256-77, 77A
Elevation of North Terrace, February 10, 1933, Percival Gallagher.	1256-82A
Study for Treatment of North Terrace, February 10, 1933, Percival Gallagher.	1256-82B
Penn Valley Park, Elevation of Central Steps to Accompany Plans No. 77 and 77A, February 7, 1932, Percival Gallagher.	1256-83
Sections Through North Terrace of Memorial, March 10, 1933.	1256-89
Study for Planting Panels on North Terrace, March 20, 1933.	1256-92
Profile of Walks leading to North Terrace, March 10, 1933.	1256-94
Blue Print to Accompany letter dated April 20, 1933 from Hare and Hare re: ledges, planting vistas, etc. Study. April 20, 1933, Hare and Hare.	[1256]-98
Sketch of trees on North Terrace with composition of trees on each side, October 25, 1933, Hare and Hare.	1256-104
Revised sketch of North Terrace Planting, October 26, 1933.	1256-105
Plans for Main Street and Pershing Road Entrance, December 1932.	1256-109

**Western Historical Manuscript Collection, Newcomb Hall, University of Missouri, Kansas City.
5100 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, MO 64110. 816-235-1543**

Liberty Memorial plans, drawings, photographs and related materials.

144 cards (microfilm of original drawings from the City of Kansas City, Missouri); 15 Construction Photographs by F. L. Tyner, Kansas City, Missouri; Two folders and one drawing from the Hare and Hare Collection.

Other papers that pertain to the Liberty Memorial include: The Albert Beach Papers, 1924-1931; J. C. Nichols Company Records, c. 1896-1980; the Liberty Memorial Association Records, 1921-1933 and the Sid and S. Herbert Hare Collection, which contains Olmsted Brothers planting plan for the site (see selected bibliography).

Plans and Drawings:

- North Terrace Walls, Platforms, Approaches and Embellishments including North Elevation of Fountains, Frieze and Steps to Frieze Court. Wight and Wight, architects, Kansas City, Missouri. June 8, 1933. 5 cards. 77.7
- Light Standards Liberty Memorial Court and Memory Hall. Stephens Chandelier Company, n. d. 2 cards. 86.2
- Marble Treatment for Museum; Celotex Wall Tile for Museum. Henges Company, Inc., Kansas City, Missouri, 1947. 86.3
- Bronze Vestibule with Bronze Lunette and Architrave for West Entrance of Memory Hall. Flour City Ornamental Iron Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota, September 17, 1928. 4 cards 86.4
- Interior Door in Museum. John Polachek Bronze and Iron Company, Long Island City, New York, June 11, 1925. 4 cards. 86.5
- Bronze Door to Shaft of Liberty Memorial. John Polachek Bronze and Iron Company, Long Island City, New York, June 2, 1925. 3 cards. 86.6
- Bronze Doors to Legion Building and Museum. John Polachek Bronze and Iron Company, Long Island City, New York. [1925]. 2 cards. 86.7
- Memorial Court paving and Jointing West Half. W. C. Company, February 24, 1925. 2 cards. 86.8
- Location of Shaft; Map of Plat and Contours (relation to property lines). Prepared by the Board of Park Commissioners, October 25, 1920. 2 cards. 86.9
- Approaches to Liberty Memorial After Kessler's Plan. (Application of George E. Kessler's Plan for Approaches to the Liberty Memorial). W. H. Dunn with Fred Gabelman. Drawing by W. I. Ayres. May 18, 1923. 3 cards. 86.10
- Grades on New Union Station Grounds. Kansas City Terminal Railway Company. n. d. 2 cards. 86.11
- Penn Valley Park Grading Plan. Olmsted Brothers, August 19, 1932, Plan No. 19. 3 cards. 86.12

Section on Line O-E-W West of Main Looking south. Magonigle. August 18, 1922. Drawing A.011, Work No. 164. 3 cards.	86.13
Framing Plan East Half of Terraces and Memory Hall (B .024); Bracing Beam Framing Plan (BR). Magonigle; Hool and Johnson, Engineers. September 8, 1922; November 23, 1923. 4 cards.	86.14
Plan at Principal Terrace Levels. Magonigle, B. 003, August 18, 1922. 4 cards. Image is weak.	86.15
Feeder Diagram and Electric Plan. Magonigle, Drawing No. 24, Work No. 164, 1923. 4 cards.	86.16
Basement and Heating Plan of Basement and Subbasement. Magonigle, Drawing No. 22, 1923. 4 cards.	86.17
North Terrace Walls, Platforms, Approaches. Wight and Wight, June 8, 1933. (See 77.7). 10 cards.	86.18
Penn Valley Park/Liberty Memorial. Sections; East and West Axis. Union Station to 28th Street, August, 1924. 5 cards.	86.19
Sections looking North and South. Magonigle, B .018, A. 018 and B .012. 1922. Images are weak. 15 cards.	86.20
Sections Looking East and West. Magonigle. A .005 series, July 12, 1922. Images are weak. 12 cards.	86.21
Elevations of Liberty Memorial Site. Magonigle, n. d. 2 cards.	86.22
Union Station and Adjacent Land. Study by George Edward Kessler. 1922; tracing by W. I Ayres, January 10, 1919. 3 cards.	86.23
Section on Line "2S". Looking North to Shaft; Also Section of E-W Axis of Shaft Looking South. No. A .019; B .019; B .016; A .004, 1922. 6 cards.	86.24
Profile Lines. George E. Kessler. n. d. 7 cards.	86.25
Plan for Art Center, Stadium and Memorial (includes study of building groups and plantings). George E. Kessler. May 15, 1922. 6 cards.	86.26
Scheme A-1st and 2nd Stage for Liberty Memorial with Comparative Diagrams. Magonigle with Kessler, March 15, 1922; March 24, 1922. 5 cards.	86.27
Plat and Contours of the Site of Liberty Memorial. Board of Park Commissioners. October 25, 1920. 4 cards.	86.28
Diagram Showing Relation of Easterly Terrace Wall to Main Street. Magonigle. A .023, No. 164, August 7, 1922. 1 card.	86.29
Time Schedule. November 1, 1923 through April 2, 1925. Magonigle. 1 card.	86.30
Elevations for Bases for Sphinx. Magonigle. Drawing No. 136,	

September 29, 1924. 1 card. 86.31

Axis of Memorial and Main Street Showing Property Lines.
George Kessler, 1922. 1 card. 86.32

Elevations looking East and west. Magonigle, A .022, Drawing No. 10, 1923.
2 cards. 86.33

Plan at Liberty Memorial Court Level, Drawing No. 4. 1 card. 86.34

Study of Memorial Proper with Suggested Future Terraces and Approaches.
Magonigle, Drawing No. PP20, January 22, 1923. 86.35

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